

THE CUSTODIANS OF THE GIFT:
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL PROPERTY AND COMMODIFICATION OF THE
FIJIAN FIREWALKING CEREMONY

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By

Guido Carlo Pigliasco

Dissertation Committee:

Andrew Arno, Chairperson

Cristina Bacchilega


Nicholas H. Barker

Geoffrey M. White

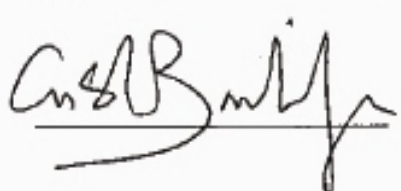
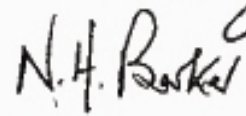
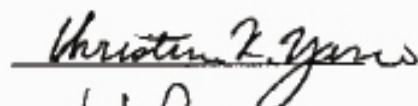
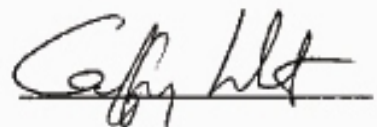
Christine R. Yano

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A kedra ivakananumi na bete ni yavusa o Sawau, Beqa.

Dedicated to the *bete* of the Sawau people of Beqa.

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The *vilavilavevo* ceremony performed by the Sawau people in a way represents an instantiation of Fijian epistemology: the accomplishments of the individuals are rooted in the contributions of those who have gone before and of those who comprise the current social networks. From this perspective, this study is the joint product of a collaborative ethnographic practice which would not have been completed without the contributions of several people and institutions.

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ABSTRACT

To disentangle the intertwined topics of property, commodification, tradition and change on the Fijian island of Beqa, this dissertation takes an unconventional ethnographic approach. The Fijian firewalking ceremony (*vilavilavevo*) traditionally performed only by members of the Sawau tribe on the island of Beqa, is a prime example of a propitiation ritual that has become commodified to suit the requirements of tourism. The reproduction of tradition on Beqa is currently being shaped by social processes such as globalization, tourism, and commodification. Issues of property, heritage and international policies intertwine with local realities and practices. Hence, in the course of this study three interconnected layers local, national and transnational, are located and discussed as dialogically engaged ethnographic material. In particular, this study points to an intensification of the meta-locale, cross-border interactions and growing interdependence between local, national and transnational actors through a deterritorializing process in which social spaces, borders and customs lose some of their previously overriding influence. On Beqa, cultural, religious, social and economic relations have become more global over time through integration of markets and the rapid spread of technologies such as the Internet, which are redefining concepts of identity, self-determination, public domain and the legitimacy of international institutions, and reflecting a hierarchy of power at the international level. This study aims to propel ethnographic practice into the social and transnational vortex of twenty-first-century social life addressing the delicate issue of the deparochialization of the research ethic. In the contemporary context of media promotion and the burgeoning industry of world tourism, indigenous rituals that have become commodified represent a well defined and highly active point of contact

between local and global realities. In such ritual performances, and in the organizational and discursive practices that support them, indigenous and globalized systems of identity, economics, law, and aesthetics interact in dialogic processes of reproduction and transformation. This study ultimately shows how the flow of new legal ideas associated with traditional knowledge and cultural expressions in an era of cross-national ideologies of culture, tradition and authenticity represents a real challenge for the modern ethnographer, in terms of following their agency, architecture and effects.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	American Anthropological Association
ACCU	Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO
AOG	Assembly of God
ASAO	Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania
AU	African Union
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMF	Christian Mission Fellowship
CPSH	Centre Polynésien des Sciences Humaines
CIOFF	Council of Organizations for Folklore Festivals and Folk Art
COE	Call of the Earth, Llamado de La Tierra
DCH	Department of Culture and Heritage (Fiji)
DHHS	Department of Health and Human services
ECTC	European Center for Tradition and Culture
EHC	Every Home for Christ
FAB	Fijian Affairs Board
FLP	Fiji Labor Party
FPRA	Fiji Performing Right Association
GCC	Great Council of Chiefs
GIPID	Global Intellectual Property Issues Division
FPA	Festival of Pacific Arts
ICOM	International Council of Museums

ICOMOS	International Council of Monuments and Sites
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICTSD	International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development
IFLC	Institute of Fijian Language and Culture (<i>Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti</i>)
IGC	Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore
IP	Intellectual Property
IPRs	Intellectual Property Rights
IRB	Institutional Review Board
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
LMS	London Missionary Society
MYF	Methodist Youth Fellowship
NAPA	National Association for the Practice of Anthropology
NAPF	National Alliance Party of Fiji
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFP	National Federation Party (Fiji)
NLFC	Native Lands and Fisheries Commission
IRB	Institutional Review Board
NLTB	Native Lands Trust Board (Fiji)
NAPA	National Association for the Practice of Anthropology
NSF	National Science Foundation

OCCA	Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture (Fiji)
OHRP	Office for Human Research Protections
PANU	Party of National Unity (Fiji)
PHCC	Pacific Harbour Cultural Centre
PIFS	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
SCRM	Short Courses on Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology (NSF)
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SDL	<i>Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua</i> ¹
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPREP	Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SVT	<i>Soqosoqo Ni Vakavulewa Ni Taukei</i> ²
TCEs	Traditional cultural expressions
TK	Traditional knowledge
TEK	Traditional environmental knowledge
TKEC	Traditional knowledge and expressions of culture
TRIPS	Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
TRR	Traditional Resource Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNCITRAL	United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference of Trade and Development
UPCI	United Pentecostal Church International

¹ Fijian People's Party, occasionally known as the United Fiji Party, was founded in 2001 by Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase.

² The party which dominated politics in the 1990s. The party was founded in 1990 as the political vehicle of the Great Council of Chiefs, with the declared goal of uniting all indigenous Fijians.

UPP	United Peoples Party (Fiji)
USP	University of the South Pacific
VKB	<i>Vola ni Kawa Bula</i> ³
WHC	World Heritage Centre
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WPPT	World Intellectual Property Organization Performances and Phonograms Treaty
WWF SPPO	World Wildlife Fund South Pacific Programme Office

³ Genealogical register of Fijians owners of the Native Land, initially developed by the NLTB (Native Lands Trust Board) and later transferred to the NLFC (Native Lands and Fisheries Commission), in accordance with Ministry of Fijian Affairs MP.4089126, containing updates of agnatic family registers.

LEXICAL NOTES

Beqan ‘dialect’ is not dissimilar from the ‘Standard’ Fijian (‘Bauan’) language understood by Fijians all over the islands, based on the Eastern variety of the Bau-Rewa area (cf. Geraghty 1983, 1994). For the orthography, this study employs the standard system devised by the missionary-linguist David Cargill, which includes the following lexical conventions:

b is pronounced /mb/ as in **number**

c is pronounced /th/ as in **this**

d is pronounced /nd/ as in **landing**

g is pronounced /ng/ as in **singer**

q is pronounced /ng/ as in **angry**

In addition, this study follows Paul Geraghty (ibid.) directions for the use and pronunciation of “j” and some consonants:

j is pronounced as in **cheek**

k is pronounced as in **king**

p is pronounced as in **spin**

t (before the vowel “i”) is pronounced as in **chick**

v is pronounced /vi/ as in **vivid**

CHAPTER 1

Methodologies, Convergences and Intersections across the Field

Introduction

The Fijian firewalking ceremony (*vilavilavevo*) is a prime example of a propitiation ritual that has become commodified to suit the requirements of tourism. Traditionally performed only by members of the Sawau *yavusa* (tribe)⁴ on the island of Beqa on culturally significant occasions, firewalking is now a major daily attraction at hotels on the main island of Viti Levu. Spectacular indigenous rituals involving ‘savage’ acts of bravery elicit the fantasies and voyeuristic gaze of tourist and media audiences. Shaped by the audiences’ predilection for highly visual cultural performances, the firewalking ceremony has become the signature ‘brand’ statement of Fijian culture.

In examining how the media and tourist industries have influenced the reproduction and reinvention of firewalking in contemporary Fijian society, my research addresses some fundamental issues in anthropology related to the social role of ritual, cultural change, and the accommodations and transformative interactions between traditional and modern economic and legal systems. I focus particularly on the political economy of ritual, including the legal status of ritual as a form of property poised between being a central element of cultural heritage and having a commercial role in the transnational tourist industry.

Thus, on the one hand, taking Beqa ceremonial firewalking as a case study, I

⁴ As defined by Ravuvu, the *yavusa* is “a social unit of agnatically related members larger than the *mataqali* and the members of which claim the descendents from a common founding male ancestor” (1983: 123).

investigate the degree to which rituals are fixed, autonomous systems and the extent to which they are embedded in cultural traditions, changes, tensions, and practices.

Following the theoretical elaborations of MacCannell (1976), Appadurai (1986) and Watson and Kopachevsky (1994), I recognize that people now live in a world in which tourism and tourist experience are major components. Images, advertising, and consumer practices are framed by style, aesthetics, taste, design, travel and leisure. Influential groups in society utilize a mixture of social, cultural and political resources to commodify traditional culture. It no longer makes sense to conceive of tourism as external to contemporary societies, somehow impacting them from the outside. What needs to be studied is how tourism has become institutionalized in different societies and how it alters the incentives and opportunities for local actors to unleash unique processes of change (Picard 1997). A key concern in this study is the differential rates and directions of change in ritual form and meaning. How does ritual take on different meanings and are they thus transformed? To what extent are community attitudes and performative styles in performing rituals inseparable from local worldview? What is the nature of the aesthetic dialog between audience and performer in cross-cultural encounters surrounding tourist spectacles?

On the other hand, I focus on the legal status of firewalking as cultural property of the Sawau people of Beqa. In Fiji, problems of cultural dominance and neo-imperialism, the effects of multiculturalism, novel religious practices, commodification, and the incursion of tourism and international economic and political agencies should be viewed as involving differences of culture and their interrelation to cultural property and cultural heritage. In recent years, indigenous peoples have been increasingly successful in

reclaiming tangible and intangible aspects of their cultural property from museums and institutions (Messenger 1999). I show that a new approach to conceptualizing cultural property is developing. This new category requires its own set of rules (Rodotà 1988).⁵ Against a static view of culture, focused on legal claims to tangibles as a culture's property, the broadened view of cultural property expands its concerns with intangibles, cultural interrelations (Shapiro 2005).

This chapter introduces how I came to this research project and how my ethnographic practices were crafted in collaboration with the Sawau *yavusa* of Beqa. Very little literature emerging from recent dissertations and published studies address any of the hundreds of problems the ethnographer should consider. Traditionally, cultural anthropologists do not receive fieldwork training or courses in research ethics before entering the field. Neophyte anthropologists often reveal their vulnerability in the introductions and methodology sections of their ethnographic studies. They mostly ignore or hush up “the complex moral relationship of the observer to the observed, of the relevance of the observed's situation to the situation of the observer's own society, and ultimately the exploration of the critical purpose of contemporary ethnographic analysis” (Marcus 1998: 75).

Although all ethical dilemmas can never be completely resolved in any ethnography, in this chapter I attempt to reveal the rules of anthropological engagement in my particular locale in Fiji.⁶ In my field experience, I realized that ethical issues had to be addressed through a blend of self-critique and self-reflexivity, which is the premise for

⁵ Law professor Stefano Rodotà helped draft the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. He is currently the Chairman of the European data protection working party and a member of the European Commission's group on ethics in science and new technologies.

⁶ Marcus calls this a “crisis in the modes of reception of ethnography” (Marcus 2002: 194).

a shared, confessional, analytic fieldwork account that is both ‘thick’ and ‘thin’ at the same time. In visual anthropology for example, reflexivity is achieved when the ethnographer intentionally reveals the underlying epistemological assumptions behind the particular ways he or she formulated and sought answers to questions and presented and represented his or her findings (Ruby 2000).⁷ Marcus (1986, 1995) believes that in multi-locale ethnography, both thickness and thinness are expected; the variability of depth is actually the most substantive form of reflexivity in multi-sited projects. Besides involving questions of access and conditions of opportunity at different sites, it underlines problems of ethical practices in relation to establishing collaborations (formerly known as ‘rapport’) and perspectives key to the project itself (Marcus 2002). This praxis, alternately termed “circumstantial activism” (Marcus 2002: 196) or “circumstantial integration” (Rabinow 1999, quoted in Marcus *ibid.*), re-emerges several times in the course of this study as I contextualize and renegotiate my own identity as a circumstantial cartographer, tourist, law consultant, activist and video director.⁸

Situating the Agenda, Siting the Arena

A series of initially disconnected events gradually began to assume a visible pattern that has shaped this project. I first stayed in Fiji in the summer of 1989, on my way to Samoa on assignment for an Italian foundation.⁹ My flight from Honolulu to Apia via Nadi was delayed in Nadi’s airport for several hours. Baburam, a Hindu taxi driver,

⁷ While Marcus (1988) led the surge to greater reflexivity recently, it has a long history in ethnographic writing (Malinowski 1922; Bateson 1936) and film (Flaherty 1923; Vertov, 1928).

⁸ Changing hats so often reminded me of Marcus’ comment about Emily Martin’s (1994) ‘flexible’ bodies and emotions: medical student at one site, volunteer at another, and corporate trainee at a third (Marcus 1998: 98; 2002: 197).

⁹ Journal of the Ligabue Study and Research Center, Venice.

helped me killing time between Lautoka's market and Nadi town. A month later, on my way back from Samoa I decided to make a detour to Fiji and spend a whole week over there. While staying at a small family-style resort on tiny Ono Island recommended by a USP student I had met on the plane, I asked my hosts the name of a solitary island silhouetted north of us. It was called Beqa, they said, and was known in Fiji as "the island of the firewalkers."

In October 1992, I returned to the South Pacific to work as a writer-consultant for RTI-Mediaset Group, preparing a documentary film on the 6th Festival of Pacific Arts held in Rarotonga. At the festival, the Cook Islands' Prime Minister, Sir Geoffrey Henry, announced that a re-enactment of a firewalking ceremony (*umu tī*) was going to be held on the same site where it had last been conducted in the 1920s. He called the firewalking ceremony an "untouched survivor of our cultural heritage" (Pigliasco & Francalanci 1992).¹⁰ When I attended the ceremony, I was invited to walk through the bed of gleaming white-hot stones along with a large number of Maohi and Māori people, and other non-natives attending the festival.

My next encounter with firewalking was in Hawai'i on November 27, 1993, where I saw the Fijian firewalking ceremony (*vilavilavevo*) at the Polynesian Cultural Centre. Four members, said to be from the Sawau *yavusa* of Beqa, guided by Fijian impresario Manoa Rasigatale, crossed the fire pit after sunset. Two brothers, Jiu Tikina and Lote Raikabula, afterwards gave me a short interview. They revealed that although they had been born and raised in Beqa, they had moved to Yanuca in the 1980s, which is

¹⁰ The ceremony was hosted by Raymond Teriirouterai Arioi Graffe, *Grand Prêtre des cérémonies traditionnelles tahitiennes*, said to be the only person left in French Polynesia able to conduct the firewalking ritual. Graffe works with the Centre Polynésien des Sciences Humaines (CPSH) of the Musée de Tahiti et des Îles. The Tahitian connections with Fijian firewalking are discussed in Chapter 2.

where their wives and some of the other *dauvila* (firewalkers)¹¹ came from. Speaking with them, I realized for the first time the germaneness and ‘consanguineity’ of firewalking performance in Oceania.

Six more years passed. In July 1999, I was attending a University of Hawai‘i fieldschool in archaeological fieldwork techniques in Waya, Yasawa Islands, under the direction of Terry Hunt. At the end of it, I tried to go to Yanuca to visit Lote and Jiu, but for a series of coincidences I ended up in Vatulele, a small island southwest of Yanuca, guest of *part-Fijian* hotelier Martin Livingstone, who wanted to add a ‘boutique’ museum to his luxury retreat, and was seeking some European exposure (Pigliasco 2000).

In July 2002, I traveled to Beqa and Yanuca to begin preliminary research on my dissertation. A few days after my arrival in Fiji, I ran into Lote Raikabula at the Warwick Hotel on the Coral Coast, where he was performing with other firewalkers. I spent the afternoon asking the performers questions before the show. Semi Tavailagi, the cousin of the Tui Caqa (Chief of Yanuca Island), gave me a pamphlet intended for hotel guests that outlined the steps of the firewalking ceremony. Speaking with these performers, I realized that any link between Yanuca’s and Beqa’s firewalkers was problematic. Questions I posed about the Tui Sawau, the Paramount Chief of the Sawau *yavusa*, were dodged.¹² I decided to visit Yanuca before Beqa, but after spending twenty-four hours with Ratu Manasa Maitue, Semi’s uncle, in Pacific Harbour waiting for a tropical storm to let up, I gave up.

I headed to the next town, Navua, the landing point for boats from Beqa. One

¹¹ Literally: ‘experts in *vila*[*vilairevo*]’.

¹² The current Tui Sawau is Ratu Timoci Matanitobua. ‘Ratu’ is the honorific title put before the names of male chiefs.

launch called in that day, the *Waqanui* from Dakuibeqa. Coincidentally, Lote and Jiu's older brother, Samu Vakuruivalu, was on board; he invited me to stay with his family on Beqa. Samu, Lote and Jiu are all *bete* (traditional priests) belonging to the *mataqali* (priestly clan) Naivilaqata. A fourth sibling, Wame Waqanaceva, had passed away five years earlier. His son, Marika Tivitivi showed me around during the week that followed, took me to the neighboring village of Dakuni, and introduced me to the politics of Sawau life.

The purpose of my initial visit was to make contact and establish a collaborative agenda with the firewalkers. I attempted to find some 'truth' to counter the often false information found in the archives I had so far examined and thereby situate my future proposed field research in Beqa.¹³ Believing that small facts speak to large issues (Geertz 1973), during that week I elicited 'flash' information on various aspects of *vilavilairevo* at three different levels: 1) epistemological - obtaining local information and knowledge, establishing the relative importance of various topics; 2) social - detecting any sensitivity about discussing such topics, studying village politics and social discourse; and 3) pragmatic - asking permission and presenting my future project to the village, participating in their performances, asking informal questions.

During this preliminary foray, I realized that understanding the sociocultural development of the firewalking ceremony required examining its commodification as cultural property. Any discussion of cultural property must address issues of indigeneity, cultural protection, tourism, intellectual property rights, cultural diversity, and identity

¹³ With the exception of a few publications, most of the literature on firewalking is limited, misleading, misrepresentative, and based on superficial research. See Chapter 2 for a critical analysis of this literature.

(Shapiro 2005). In the contemporary industries of media promotion and world tourism, indigenous rituals that have become commodified represent well-defined and highly dynamic points of contact between local and global realities.¹⁴ While ethnography remains a pale reflection of the constancy of social change (Rosaldo 1989: 91), it nevertheless can show how ritual performances and the organizational and discursive practices that support them interact with indigenous and globalized systems of identity, economics, law, and aesthetics in dialogic processes of reproduction and transformation.

Ethnographic Layers

Riles contends that the conventional ethnographic model fails to capture intimacy with a particular ethnographic subject. The conventional model starts with anthropologists beginning with theoretical questions and problems at home in the academy. Then we go to the field to solve those problems. In the course of our fieldwork encounter, however, we may discover “different questions and problems altogether; it is these new questions that are the ultimate effect or consequence of the ethnographic encounter” (Riles 2006: 63). Throughout my fieldwork, I found myself grappling with unexpected methodological and theoretical problems. I found some comfort, however, in recent assertions that the field of socio-cultural anthropology has been constituted by a range of distances and boundaries that “are changing as the geography of distance and difference alters in postcolonial/neocolonial situations, as power relations of research are reconfigured, as new technologies of transport and communication are deployed, and as the ‘natives’ are recognized for their specific worldly experiences and histories of

¹⁴ Moore (1987) advocates the use of the processual model elaborated by Turner (1985) to examine ritual processes and change in their performance.

dwelling and traveling” (Clifford 1997: 190).

When I returned to Fiji to begin fieldwork in November 2004, I brought along a sibylline statement from *Anthropology as a Social Critique*:

The time now seems ripe for a thorough integration of an ethnographic practice that remains markedly interpretative and interested in problems of meaning with the political-economical and historic implications of any of its projects research. (Marcus & Fisher 1999: 85)

Ethnographic methods are useful tools for accessing the complex ways in which law, decision-making, and legal regulations are embedded in wider social processes. However, Starr and Goodale (2002) state that a key dilemma for modern ethnographers is how to study local phenomena that have become ‘global-legal’ events. They suggest adopting a multi-sited methodology in order to view the various points and opinions that constitute complex social networks. They argue that conceptualizing legal ethnographic work in broad spatial terms allows a researcher working to obtain fine-grained ethnographic detail while gaining insight into the importance of regional and global legal processes. Multi-sited studies allow “intersecting convergences” to emerge (Star and Goodale 2002: 3; see also Goodale 2001, 2002; Merry 2002, 2001, 2000; Riles 2000; Darian-Smith 2000; Woodiwiss 1998; Maurer 1997; Nader 2002, 1999, 1995).

Soon after my arrival in Suva, I faced the reality that doing ethnography today means contextualizing and systematically connecting the most diverse elements of a culture. I imagined this task as assembling a multi-layered text which would depict multifaceted aspects of cultural property and commodification of the Sawau *yavusa*. The ethnographic challenge would be to decipher and interpret the intermingling of these facets without reducing the situated epistemological layering to a distanced textual

strategy. In other words, I had to situate my research within contemporary anthropological collaborative models while dealing with the complex convergences of Fiji's postcolonial, globalized milieu.

At the local level, I found many layers of knowledge already fully integrated. These generated from the chiefly village of Dakuibeqa to the settlements and villages where members of the Sawau *yavusa* had moved and from the temporary sites of the hotels hosting firewalking performances to Suva's government offices, national and museum archives, and the Methodist Church's headquarters. That "relational spaces" potentially expand to the transnational level (Gustavson and Cytrynbaum 2003: 252). Des Chene (1993, 1997) advises the ethnographer to constantly rethink the relations among places, projects and sources of knowledge. While jotting and reorganizing my notes before going to sleep in Fiji, I often pondered the incredible web of epistemological connections, associations and meanings linking the villages, tourism industry, government, law, and church, locally and transnationally.

During the course of my fieldwork in Fiji, I learned that as anthropology bends, blurs, and is redefined to address the complexity of the world system, it must also borrow methods from other social sciences and the humanities. It became clear to me that ethnographic research strategies are broadly influenced by the less visible faces of law and the view from below (Nader 2002: 190). Later, after my return from the field, I read an exchange between Don Brenneis and George Marcus in *Anthropology News*. Brenneis, former president of the American Anthropological Association, describes how rewarding his cross-disciplinary conversations in law and the social sciences have been (Brenneis 2005). Marcus concurs with Brenneis that research agendas of anthropology are

becoming more and more interdisciplinary, and that “the tropes for producing ethnography have changed substantially under powerful influences from anthropology’s participation in interdisciplinary movements since the ‘writing culture’ critique of the 1980s” (Marcus 2005: 9).¹⁵ In the course of my research, I discovered that ethnography inevitably absorbs other fields of inquiry, including the law, media, arts, politics and international political discourse. In particular, my research project on cultural property particularly necessitated a close examination of the legality and ethics of ‘informed consent’ and the ethnographic enterprise itself.¹⁶

Beyond Consent: Ethos, Ethics and the ‘Ethnographic Contract’

When you begin doing ethnography, group members are going to wonder who you are. They will listen to you and watch your behavior, and they will draw on their own repertoire of social categories to find one that fits you. At the beginning, you will offer some explanation of what your interests are and what it is you intend to do. This initial presentation of self leads us right into the issue of research ethics. (Agar 1996: 105)

Ethical qualms

In November 2004, as I prepared to land in Beqa and introduce myself to the Dakuibeqa villagers as their resident anthropologist for the next nine months or so, I worried over my reception and whether I had any right, as an outsider, to be conducting

¹⁵ Similarly, “contemporary political, cultural, and economic conditions bring new pressures and opportunities to anthropology. The range of possible venues for ethnographic study has expanded dramatically and the discipline’s potential membership is more diverse” (Clifford 1997:192).

¹⁶ Anthropologists have not been immune to the recent debate in both public and professional arenas that has called attention to significant ethical problems associated with ethnographic data collection. I am alluding to the recent tarnishing of the image of the foreign anthropologist with the publication of Patrick Tierney’s (2000) book *Darkness in El Dorado*. As Fluehr-Lobban notes, “anthropology is no exception to the whistleblowers syndrome, well documented for other professions, and recognizable in the discipline from Boas in 1919, to Wolf and Jorgenson in 1970, and finally to Turner and Sponsel in 2000” (Fluehr-Lobban 2003: 25).

this research.¹⁷ In the field of Fijian studies, the object of research has too often been defined by colonial officers and other non-native outsiders. Peter France (1969), anticipating Hobsbawm & Ranger's *Invention of Tradition* (1983) by more than a decade, describes the interactions between the colonial rulers and Fijian natives. The superimposition of an alien (European) system on Fijian culture eventually became 'Fijianized' and considered 'authentic'. The tenets of the orthodoxy conceived and propagated by the colonial administration have become ineradicably absorbed into the Fijian national consciousness. They have become part of an "immemorial tradition" that continues to resist decolonization and independence efforts (France *ibid.*). For example, colonial divide-and-rule policies reified social and cultural differences between the indigenes and Indian immigrants; the socio-political repercussions of this division make the front page of the local press every day in Fiji. Kelly & Kaplan (2001) observe that while in their myths indigenous Fijians tell a story of a relationship between the people of the land and foreign, powerful chiefs who arrive later to rule them, missionaries told a different story of the western Christian duty to civilize and protect 'primitive' indigenous people and the desire of the 'uncivilized' to be ruled by the civilized so they can advance up the evolutionary ladder. More recent incursions by outsiders include the tourist industry and foreign investors intent on exploiting Fiji's timber and precious metals and minerals.

I found that thinking about Geertz's (2001) "Life Among the Anthros" had a wonderful tranquillizing effect. Recalling André Gide's 'Aesopian' *Interviews*

¹⁷ My Permit to Entry and Reside for the purpose to conduct research was initially issued for six months, the maximum period allowed by the Ministry of Immigration in Fiji. Through the intercession of the Department of Culture and Heritage and the endorsement of the Ministry of Education, I petitioned and obtained an extension for a maximum of three months longer without having to re-present all the application documents and pay double fees.

Imaginaires (written for *Le Figaro* between 1941 and 1942), Geertz strikes a Machiavellian blow for the contemporary ethnographer.¹⁸ Gide had taken up the question of the responsibility of the ‘intellectuals’ for the fall of France during the German occupation. He narrates an imaginary fable by the natives of the Congo as follows: A great number of people crowd together in a large skiff hoping to cross a broad river. The overloaded boat gets stuck right away. The question now is which of the passengers have to get out. Put ashore first are a fat merchant, a shyster lawyer, a sordid money-lender and a brothel-keeper, but the skiff is still trapped in the mud. Next sent ashore are the proprietor of a gambling den, a slave dealer and a few respectable people. Still the boat does not move until a thin-as-straw missionary steps onto the bank. “‘There he is,’ shouted immediately the natives: ‘He’s the responsible of the heaviness: hue and cry!’” (Gide 1943: 15-16).

In his piece, Geertz trades the clergyman for an imaginary anthropologist, but argues that given all that has happened to indigenous populations over the past half-century, “encountering anthropologists and critics of anthropologists, as difficult as both may have been at times to deal with, surely ranks as historical small change, a very small blip on a very large curve” (Geertz 2001: 22). As I looked at the people traveling with me in the boat to their village on Beqa, I thought, what harm could my modest project do to them? Wasn’t I there just to participate and observe? Would the outcomes of my research make their life any better? Or would eliciting putatively sensitive information somehow jeopardize the Sawau people’s social, political or economic wellbeing?

When Michael Agar (1980) wrote his informal introduction to the ethnography,

¹⁸ Gide (1943) had expressed a new concept of liberty, declaring that absolute freedom destroys both the individual and society, that freedom must be linked with the discipline of tradition.

The Professional Stranger, he confessed he actually wanted to entitle it *The Informant's Apprentice*. I felt that way as I freshly waded ashore in Dakuibeqa on November 17, 2004. I first went to Samu's house, where I had stayed my first time in Beqa. He was still weeding his plantation, so Waisea and Reta prepared me some tea. As I waited, Marika came by. "So, what do you want to learn this time?" he asked. In the late afternoon, Samu and his wife Merewai returned to the village. The first thing they told me was that they had been waiting for my return for two years. I immediately felt a sense of assuredness and some of my uncertainties about the months ahead started fading away.

The ethnographic contract

Early in my research, I realized that a major concern for the ethnographer is to position his or her research so as not to rock the boat of the society being studied or, even worse, risk sinking the possibility of future ethnographic research in that particular milieu. Between the researcher and the researched intervenes a fictitious contract, an *accord reposant sur l'honneur*, which I imagine as an 'ethnographic contract'. Two incidents exemplify the problems that arise when researchers fail to recognize any contract with the local community in which they conduct research.

One day in January 2005, I was talking to one of the elders in Dakuibeqa who recalled a film crew shooting a firewalking ceremony in the village. This gave me the idea to contact the Film and Television Unit in Suva, which is a repository for an Audio Visual Archive.¹⁹ I decided to show the elders in Dakuibeqa early and recent archival visual representations of their firewalking ceremony. Based on their responses, I would

¹⁹ The Audio Visual Archive was established in 1985 in a joint venture operation between the Fiji Government and the Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany; it is currently overseen by the Ministry of Information, Communications and Media Relations.

then interpret the rites' diachronic and dialectic changes (discussed in Chapter 5). After a letter to the Ministry endorsed by the Department of Culture and Heritage, and several phone calls, my field consultant Mika and I traveled to the headquarters of the Film and Television Unit. The director, Ratu Alipate Mataitoga, cordially expressed interest in the project, but told us that a researcher from an Australian university had come by a few months earlier, borrowed some archival material without explaining how and to what use it would be put, and then disappeared with them. Because of this researcher's unprofessional behavior, I was not permitted access to the archives until after Mataitoga obtained formal approval from the Ministry. After another letter and two more months had passed without hearing any word back, one day at the end of April, Ratu Mataitoga, emitting a typical Fijian hissing sigh followed by a brief silence, consented to ask his staff to copy onto VHS tape all the footage they had in their archives on firewalking.

The second episode is ethically even more sensitive. At low tide one morning in May, while I was chatting with Ratu Felix Colatanavanua outside the *vale levu* (chief's house and compound) in Dakuibeqa, a fast fiber boat docked, marooning three young men who clumsily waded ashore after wrapping a *sulu* around their cargo shorts. The trio turned out to be a 'team' of doctoral students in entomology and biology from a US mainland university. Not much impressed or interested in discovering a 'resident anthropologist' in the village, they told me briefly about their planned four-day scientific mission to the jungle of Beqa to collect ants and snails. One of them told me that their project had started in Eastern Fiji three months before, and that it was supposed to terminate West, in the Yasawas. A couple of weeks later, I mentioned them to Asenaca Bainivualiku, head of the Research Department of the Minister of Education, while we

were discussing the status of my petition for extension of my immigration visa. She jumped when she heard the story. Although she was appointed to evaluate and allocate all research permits, she had not received any information or application from any ‘team’ or individual researcher coming from a US university to do such research in Fiji. “What are they going to do with the material they collected?” she asked. Similar concerns came from Mere Ratunabuabua with the Department of Culture and Heritage. Felix Colatanavanua expressed his worries on behalf of the Sawau *yavusa* in an interview given to the *Fiji Sun* on May 28, 2005, relating the trio had victoriously announced that in the forested *vanua*, they had ‘captured’ a snail formerly considered extinct (Hicks 2005).²⁰

Both cases demonstrate that some researchers—albeit non-anthropologists—have failed to recognize any social contract with the local community in which they conduct research. Furthermore, they have not done much “to preserve opportunities for future fieldworkers to follow them to the field,” as prescribed by the AAA 1998 Ethical Guidelines.²¹ They show little responsibility to their colleagues to conduct fieldwork “in a manner that facilitates their activities or that does not unjustly compromise their ability

²⁰ *Vanua* means ‘land’, but in Fiji the term has multiple meanings mostly suggesting a social unit with a particular territory. Ravuvu (1983, 1987, 1988) and Tuwere (2002) interpret *vanua* as a sense of place, also as ‘the people of the land, common descent, common bonds, parochialism, identity. France (1969), Chapelle (1978), Walter (1978) and others have characterized the *vanua* as a legal ‘landowning group’ expressed in traditional terms. Nayacakalou (1975) and Lasaqa (1984) describe the *vanua* as a ‘decision making group’ for traditional affairs and the basis of traditional leadership. Watters (1969), Ward (1987), Overton (1988) and Arno (1993) identify the village located on *vanua* and the land itself as the locus of traditional practices. Jolly (1992b) notes that *vanua* means traditional culture in the widest sense.

Incidentally, the first species of fauna mentioned in the Māori claim ‘Wai 262’ concerning ongoing destruction of their ecosystems and loss of Maori knowledge is a *puupuu harakeke*, a flax snail (*placostylus hongii*) (Van Meijl 2007).

²¹ <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm>

to carry out professional work,” as prescribed by NAPA in 1988²². Many researchers neglect to obtain a research visa. They enter Fiji on a three months tourist visa (easily extendable for an equal period) in order to bypass the inevitable bureaucratic delays and research fees imposed by the government.

Establishing legal research guidelines

Any kind of association with a society disclosing its traditional knowledge and cultural properties to the researcher entails a social contract. Essential contractual principles must form the basis of our future long-lasting relationship with the community. The ethnographer must determine: the participants in this contract; what is being exchanged and the terms of exchange; the prospect of benefit-sharing. Darrell Posey, an internationally known advocate for the protection of indigenous knowledge and practices, suggests that scientists adopt a “new code of *eco-ethno ethics*” independent of any international laws or conventions, congresses or parliaments, and enforcement of copyright and patents (Posey 1990, 2004).²³ According to this ethic, researchers must explain what they study to the natives and why it is important for the people themselves.

It is also important for researchers to seek out and abide by any research policies in their host country. These are not always available, however. Sipiriano Nemani explained to me that there is no formal procedure to vet and issue research permits in Fiji, especially to control research on cultural issues. For overseas researchers like me, a letter of assurance is given by the Ministry of Education or the Fiji Museum before permits are

²² http://www.practicinganthropology.org/about/?section=ethical_guidelines

²³ On top of his pioneering association with the Kayapó of Brazil and the development of the concept of Traditional Resource Rights (TRR), Posey was the organizer of the First International Congress of Ethnobiology, which resulted in the Declaration of Belém (1988). The Declaration recognized the responsibility and obligation of scientists and environmentalists to compensate native peoples for use of their knowledge and resources.

issued by the Immigration Department, a process that might take months.

The Fiji government is concerned about the increasing exploitation and commercialization of Fijian traditional knowledge (*kilaka vaka-Viti*). Fijian officials are aware that overseas researchers adhere to different procedures imposed by their home institutions and government agencies, but these are considered complex, inefficient and insufficient. Anthropological participant observation and similar research methodologies may not be appropriate in certain Fijian communities due to their strict observation of traditional protocols and beliefs. Therefore, a uniform research policy must be set up to educate researchers on cultural awareness (personal communication).

Following the example of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, which has designed a cultural research policy that includes guiding principles on Ni-Vanuatu customs and traditions and a research agreement policy between the National Cultural Council and the local community, the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture) (IFLC) is preparing on behalf of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs , Culture and Heritage a Research Policy proposal to examine the current procedure in granting approvals for the conduct of research in Fiji. The objective is to formulate a research policy and a code of ethics for both local and overseas researchers who will be expected to protect and uphold the customary rights of the traditional owners. The policy is being developed in conjunction with the implementation of indigenous intellectual property rights through a *sui generis* protection bill intended to protect Fiji's tangible and intangible cultural heritage.²⁴

Specific goals outlined in the proposal include: 1) alter the current process of

²⁴ Pacific Model Law, Part 7, clause 36(e); In Fiji's 5th Draft revision is regulated at Part 5, clause 35(e) (Sep 7, 2005).

issuance of permits by the Immigration Department, establishing the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage as the central authority for research permit issuance, with the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture) as the coordinating agency; 2) design and establish a copyright agreement to be employed between the traditional owners of natural and cultural resources and researchers; 3) establish a benefit-sharing system for any financial gains resulting from the involvement of Fijians and their ecosystem; and 4) establish a National Cultural Research Committee (NCRC) of experts from different institutions including the Ministry of Education, the Fiji Museum, The Department of Culture and Heritage, the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture), the Native Lands and Fisheries Commission, the Fijian Affairs Board, the Department of Environment, and the National Archives to vet research proposals and make recommendations to the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage before it issues a permit for research to be undertaken in a designated area. In addition, the policy suggests that any research topic should be of relevance to the socio-economic status and needs of the indigenous people. Community members and leaders should be allowed to question the value and benefit of the research to them and given the opportunity to propose alterations of submitted research proposals to suit their needs (Nemani, personal communication).

Ethos of interdependency

Life in a Fijian village demands allowing others to control one's path and accepting interdependency. The Fijian ethos of social relatedness is well established in the ethnographic literature. For indigenous Fijians, life revolves around the family and individual needs to contribute to the larger kin group. Individual activity is devoted to

developing and reinforcing social relationships and promoting collective interests.

Ravuvu (1987) maintains that although British rule and Christian influence may have offered the opportunity for increased individualism in the Fijian character, Fijians still find it difficult to separate themselves from their people. Individualism is discouraged for the sake of the group solidarity and harmony. Humility is a virtue, while self-aggrandizement is the quintessence of bad manners and antithetical to traditional values (Toren 1990). Core Fijian values emerge from the concept of *vakaturaga*, which encompasses qualities of chiefly behavior (Ravuvu 1987). Becker (1995) shows how creation, maintenance and evaluation of social relationships are based on the reciprocity of *veilomani* (caring, loving others) and *veikawaitaki* (care, paying attention to others' needs). Care and attention are evident in the quality of food exchange and expressions of *loloma*, familial love, particularly important among kin related by blood (Arno 2003).

As I became embedded in the local social matrix in Fiji, I recognized that decisional authority for research participation did not necessarily rest with the individuals signing my consent forms or verbally agreeing to participate in this study. Individual autonomy and decisional capacity depend on the social context of family ties and community obligations. Social action is guided by the tight affiliation of individuals in a relational matrix. In Fiji, as in other cultural settings, a person's extended family, community leaders, or tribal elders play a significant role in major decisions (Marshall 1992, 2003; Marshall & Koenig 1996; Ijsselmuiden & Faden 1992; Levine 1991).

This became apparent to me the first night I arrived in Beqa in 2004. After dinner, Samu explained to me that in the absence of the Tui Sawau (Ratu Timoci Matanitobua), his *matanivanua* (village chief's spokesman), Nemani Nabure, would

exercise the *isevusevu* protocols on his behalf. *Isevusevu* are “ceremonial offerings of *yaqona* [kava] by the host to the guest, or the guest to his host and done in respect of recognition and acceptance of one another" (Ravuvu 1983: 120).

Nevertheless, he wanted me to travel back to Suva the next morning with the firewalkers going to perform at the Fijian Hotel. Deaf to the fact that I had arrived only five hours earlier, Samu insisted that both of us should visit the Tui Sawau in Suva to perform a *isevusevu* with him. The next day's quick trip to town resulted in a concise exchange of polite remarks with Ratu Timoci during his lunch break. However, in deference to his authority and in consideration of the length and depth of my research, I spent more time with him and his sister Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga over the following months, disclosing more details about my research and preliminary findings and having him review the main questions I wanted to ask before any formal interviewing took place.

The problem of consent

My research was declared IRB exempt from IRB review since it did not involve any biomedical or experimental protocols. Nevertheless, before leaving for Fiji with a stack of printed consent forms, my own code of ethics inherited from ten years of legal practice led me to investigate the issue more deeply. In seeking IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval, key issues for cultural anthropologists are, first, the professional competency of the IRB and its latitude to interpret anthropological protocols, especially in multi-sited studies (Gordon 2003), and, second, requirements for informed consent (Marshall 2003).

A letter dated September 22, 2003 from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) stated that a oral

history interview methods “do not need to be reviewed by an institutional review board (IRB) because it does not involve the type of research defined by DHHS regulations” (Plattner 2004).

However, just a few months before my departure for Fiji, the American Anthropological Association released a statement confirming that ethnographic research projects are subject to the Common Rule and therefore to review by an IRB.²⁵ To ensure that participants in any proposed research are not harmed involves “a systematic investigation...designed to develop or contribute to generalizeable knowledge.”²⁶ The cardinal rule of human subjects protection is that no one should be harmed because they are involved in research (Plattner 2004). Although most ethnographic research involves minimal risk, we cannot presume that it will never bring risk of harm through discrimination, disruption of personal and family relationships, loss of rights or claims, or civil or criminal prosecution as a result of disclosure of private, identifiable information such as data gathered during interviews, filmed on video, or recorded on tape or field notes. Assuming the risk of violation of informant confidentiality (mostly in biomedical lab research), IRBs can go so far as to require that the ethnographer destroys interview

²⁵ Practically, all universities and research organizations in the US have agreed to follow a set of regulations called The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) “Common Rule” (technically “Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects” 45 CFR 46), whose history was born out of the atrocities of the Nazi concentration camps of WWII. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) includes the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), which under the new federal regulations established in 2001 monitors the institutional review board’s (IRB) work. Up to a few years ago universities interpreted these regulations as primarily applying to biomedical research, keeping a minimal burden of oversight on social and behavioral science research. More recently institutions have tightened their IRB procedures, instituting new requirements for training researchers and staff, all of which can become an impediment to anthropological research (Plattner 2004).

²⁶ Adopted by the AAA Executive Board June 4, 2004 (<http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/irb.htm>).

tapes.²⁷ Compliance would make longitudinal and comparative ethnographic research impossible (Church 2002). It would also make it difficult for researchers to generate new hypotheses, write future articles, and develop new grant proposals based on their previous data. Furthermore, transcribing and analyzing ethnographic data may take months, even years, and it is often necessary to double-check transcriptions against the originals long after the transcriptions were first made (Gordon 2003).²⁸

Similar issues arise with the requirement of obtain informed consent. The Common Rule, rooted in the biomedical paradigm, requires the consent process to conform to procedures carried out in clinical research (Gordon 2003; Plattner 2004). This has led to the assumption that social scientists should use written consent forms.²⁹ The question is whether or not, in minimal-risk research, an IRB should consider waiving informed consent for unstructured, informal, ‘sidewalk’ interviews conducted as part of ongoing ethnographic research.³⁰ Marshall (2003) points out that anthropologists often

²⁷ The OPRR (Office for Protection from Research Risks) is not clear on the deadline for destruction of such records (see §45CFR74.53) and different institutions vary in their guidelines (Gordon 2003).

²⁸ Linda Shopes, an historian with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, argued that destroying tapes violates a fundamental principle of historical research. While anonymity is always an option, anonymous sources lack credibility in history. Knowing the precise identity of a narrator is important to assess that person’s relationship to the topic under discussion and hence the perspective from which he or she speaks (<http://www.aaup.org/publications/Academe/2002/02mj/02mjfr.htm>).

²⁹ The issue is yet to be clarified. According to the Common Rule, data obtained through “interaction” as well as “intervention” with living individuals is subject to regulatory oversight. Yet the Common Rule exempts from oversight research that uses “interview procedures” *unless* the information obtained is “recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects” *and* “any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation” (Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Public Welfare Part 46 (2)).

³⁰ The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 45 Public Welfare, Department of Health and Human Services, Part 46 Protection of Human Subjects, Section §46.116.d (General requirements for informed consent), authorizes research with vastly different consent procedures, or no formal consent entirely, if the research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects. Section

work in field settings where informal interactions with study participants are frequent. Continually obtaining consent under these conditions would be burdensome and not logistically feasible. Furthermore, in research involving observation of anonymous behavior (in my case, observing many people in villages, markets, hotels, and performance spaces), individual informed consent would be unrealistic and unnecessary (Marshall 2003).

Obtaining written consent instead of oral consent can also interfere with the establishment and development of rapport, a fundamental component of ethnographic research (Gordon 2000). While oral consent provides the opportunity for open interchange between anthropologist and participants, written consent creates a rigid ‘unidirectional’ relationship (Gordon 2003). Judgments about whether or not to seek written or verbal consent must be based on the nature of the research, the context of the study, and the seriousness of the risk involved for participants.

Some anthropologists question the validity of ‘informed consent’ for ethnographic research. Getting informed consent assumes that an anthropologist knows precisely what he or she is going to research. However, “unlike a doctor who can give some, albeit limited, idea of the potential outcome of a procedure, an anthropologist cannot, and should not hope to control the effects of his or her interactions” (Kelly 2003: 190). Kathryn Tomlinson (2005), who worked closely with Venezuelan anthropologists investigating indigenous rights processes, asks if anthropologists should be accountable for any socio-political consequences of what they write and, if so, to *whom* are they

§46.117.c (Documentation of informed consent) discusses the waiver of written consent, either if the consent document would be the only form linking the subject and the research and if the risk of harm would derive from the breach of confidentiality, or if the research is of minimal risk and signing a consent document would be culturally inappropriate in that context.

accountable.³¹ Henry Greely (1999) raises questions about the risks involved in group informed consent, asking who is in the position of sufficient authority to give consent for an entire group.³²

Just as researchers must be familiar with ethical issues in conducting research and the federal guidelines that govern social science investigations, so must they learn local protocols for obtaining access to data and information. The following anecdote illustrates that the NLTB (Native Lands Trust Board) in Fiji, although with a different mission, may share concerns similar to that of an IRB when it comes to academic research. In order to reconstruct the history of the Sawau *yavusa*, I needed access to the *Tukutuku Raraba* (oral histories of Fijian groups recorded in past centuries by the Native Land Commission) and the *Vola Ni Kawa Bula* (VKB, a genealogical register of Fijian owners of native land).³³ In December 2004, Watisoni Waqa from the Native Land and Fisheries Commission (NLFC) and Taniela Tabukarawa, Assistant to the Roko Tui Rewa, visited Dakuibeqa to prepare a census survey. They explained that in order to access the Sawau

³¹ Paper presented at a workshop on Multi-Sited Ethnography held at the University of Sussex in June 2005.

³² Greely posed these questions while chairing a panel at a workshop held at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1999.

³³ The Native Land commission recorded oral histories in the process of establishing a register of land holders' rights, titles and customs. Today, the veracity and accuracy of these records are often questioned.

The VKB genealogical record was initially developed by the NLTB (Native Lands Trust Board) and later transferred to the NLFC (Native Lands and Fisheries Commission), in accordance with Ministry of Fijian Affairs MP.4089126. It contains updates of registered agnatic family members at multiple social levels. Details concerning the demographic makeup of the *yasana* (province), *koro* (village), *yavusa* (tribe), *mataqali* (landholding subclan), *itokatoka* (extended family), *tikina* (district) and *vanua* are all contained in the VKB. Only indigenous Fijians can register in the VKB, which brings the following rights:

- The right to own land, as all native land is held in trust;
- The right to stand for a Fijians seat in Parliament;
- The right to receive scholarships for Fijians children;
- Special preferential treatment, such as loans of money at some banks like the Fiji Development Bank.

tikina (district) recorded oral accounts and agnatic descent registry, I needed a letter of authorization from the Tui Sawau, Ratu Timoci Matanitobua, and another from the Rewa Provincial Council. When on February 10, 2005 Mika and I arrived at NLFC headquarters in Suva, where the *Tukutuku Raraba* and the VKB registers are conserved, we were directed to the office of its C.E.O. Ratu Viliame Tagivetaua, a member of the Great Council of Chiefs. Ratu Tagivetaua glanced at us from above his spectacles while still holding in his hand the authorizations obtained from the Tui Sawau, the Roko Tui Rewa and the Ministry of Education, attached to my letter requesting permission to view their documentation. “What about the *vanua*?” he exclaimed, “My job is to protect both the Chief *and* the *vanua*!” It was clear that in this case the multi-purpose term *vanua* meant ‘the land people’. Ratu Tagivetaua counted from his register six *mataqali* (clans) I needed to receive written authorization from. One of these, Navusalevu, I had never heard of before. I heard Mika timidly say, “*E sega ni dua e tiko e na koro...* (None of them are left in the village [Dakuibeqa]).” Such apparent incongruence showed that the recordings conserved at NLFC, not necessarily corresponded to the current social organization of the *vanua*. Ratu Tagivetaua had “Salote”, “Joana”, “Ana” and “Suliasi” from Navusalevu *mataqali* still registered and alive, though they were long gone from Dakuibeqa. In the following days, with the help of Mika, we managed to promptly pass around my informed consent form to the five clans left: Nakoroqaqa (chiefly clan), Naivilaqata, Naqara, Buto, Valeilawa, adding and discussing details about my project with the members of each clan, and receiving written consent from each respective *turaga ni mataqali* (head of clan).

In developing research guidelines, Fijian authorities have followed the example of

the World Health Organization's ethics policy (WHO 2003), but propose that it also conform to customary laws and ethics of the indigenous people involved in the study. According to Nemani, informed individual consent should be obtained in accordance with accepted ethical procedures, in writing or by oral consent or in accordance with accepted local practices which should be discussed and agreed by the representatives of the indigenous community under study. Even when collective consent has been obtained, it can be withdrawn in cases where conflict between the parties cannot be resolved or there is a clear violation of ethical principles; furthermore, confidentiality should be ensured by limiting access to the data or by coding the data appropriately (Nemani, personal communication).

Ethnographers are aware that handing over consent forms to be signed in the course of our fieldwork is like doing "origami in a hurricane" (Agar 1996: 232). Cultural anthropologists do not always obtain formal informed consent for their research, but assume that if the community tolerates their presence it implies consent. I argue that the protocols of 'informed consent' should be expanded beyond explaining data collection methods and getting signatures, developing a trust in ongoing relationships with the participants and allowing them to control access to the data collected. Informed consent should be an interactive, flexible and dynamic process, not an event or a form.³⁴

³⁴ The DHHS' Office for Protection from Research Risks pamphlet on "Tips on Informed Consent" states that, "Informed consent is a process, not just a form. Information must be presented to enable persons to voluntarily decide whether or not to participate as a research subject. It is a fundamental mechanism to ensure respect for persons through provision of thoughtful consent for a voluntary act. The procedures used in obtaining informed consent should be designed to educate the subject population in terms that they can understand. Therefore, informed consent language and its documentation (especially explanation of the study's purpose, duration, experimental procedures, alternatives, risks, and benefits) must be written in 'lay language'. The written presentation of information is used to document the basis for consent and for the subjects' future reference. The consent document should be revised when deficiencies are

Informed consent should be viewed as an ongoing interaction between the researcher and the members of the community who are being studied. Consent is subject to the cultural rules and understandings of the community where the ethnographer resides. Consent *becomes* part of the constant activities of doing ethnographic research, establishing bonds of trust and negotiating permission as part of the ethnographic contract.

In some cases, ethnographers return to the same community over time for twenty years or more. Both IRB and the researcher should view informed consent in this context as an ongoing and dynamic process, reviewed on a case-by-case basis (AAA 2004). I realized that the researcher cannot always predict the course of fieldwork. Thus, the process of obtaining informed consent should be flexible and incremental throughout the course of the research and can be ensured without the use of forms. I suggest interpreting it as a professional responsibility part of the idea of the ethnographic contract discussed above. In other words, I believe that the complicity and complexity of ethnographic research engenders an approach to ethics that should be both dynamic and flexible, to allow the outsider to become the desired anthropological insider.

An anecdote about a case of revised consent frames the issue. A well-known Beqan elder had retired to the suburbs of Suva. In the 1970s, he had been one of the key figures in the emerging market for firewalking shows. In January 2004, after Mika and I performed the *isevusevu* and gave him full details, he happily agreed to participate in my research. I taped his verbal consent. He then showed us some rare images and allowed himself to be filmed and photographed with them for the multimedia *Sawau Project*. At the end of a long interview, doleful that we could not stay longer, he asked us to visit

noted or when additional information will improve the consent process.”
(<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/ictips.htm> accessed Dec. 1 2005).

again soon. However, while we were running some previews of the project, still in montage form, at the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture), his daughter delivered a message from him asking to have his name and images removed from the film. I was convinced we could change his mind, but Felix Colatanavanua, who was in charge of the editing on behalf of the Sawau *yavusa*, explained that it was not worth getting into the winding path of forcing an elder, or his family, to change their decision. Nor would invoking the hierarchy from above (*i cake*) or trying maneuvering relatives from the elder's village to change his mind work. It simply meant that the elder was not worthy, he did not deserve to be part of all the work we had done for the Sawau *yavusa*, to whom he belonged.³⁵

In Beqa, I learned that there are many ways to obtain consent. I approached it as a more formal process when dealing with members of chiefly families, heads of clans, and governmental officials, but less formally when I realized that it awed and intimidated somebody to ask for written consent. In the latter situation, I preferred to tape verbal consent during the course of an interview or in some cases deferred obtaining consent. I interpreted all given consent only as a 'condition precedent' to the final approval from the person interviewed, filmed or photographed. Furthermore, all participants during my fieldwork were offered the opportunity to verify statements, remain anonymous, and receive a copy of my final report.

Obtaining institutional consent

My first week in Suva, I met Ratu Jone Naucabalavu, head of the Department of

³⁵ I understood then that "to travel the straight path demands attributes such as honesty, respect, service, and humility" (Katz 1993: 6).

Pre-History Archaeology at the Fiji Museum.³⁶ Although my research objectives were quite detached from the archaeological focus of the museum, he offered me museum support and put me in touch with Mika Tubanavau in Rukua, a village on the west coast of Beqa.³⁷ Raised in Beqa from a Lauan father and a Beqan mother, Mika had been involved with firewalking in Beqa since the mid-1970s. When Prince Charles arrived in Beqa in 1974, Mika was already part of the committee in charge of the preparation on the firewalking ceremony.³⁸ Mika's future wife, Sai, was asked to dance the *taralala* by a young, immaculately outfitted Prince of Wales.³⁹ Mika participated in the first comprehensive survey of the Island of Beqa conducted by John Bigay and Freda Rajotte (1981).⁴⁰ In the following years, Mika became the point man for the Fiji Museum in Beqa and later assisted in other ethnographic projects. In the mid-1980s, Andrew Crosby arrived in Fiji to investigate the relationship between structure, history and material culture in the archaeological record of Beqa (Crosby 1988). Mika remained by his side throughout his archaeological and ethnographic fieldwork. He then worked with Leah Burns who was studied the impact of tourism in Beqa (Burns 1993, 1994) and Sarah

³⁶ Naucabalavu was liaison field officer when I participated in Terry Hunt's field school on Waya in the Yasawas in 1999.

³⁷ I discuss my archival fieldwork at the Fiji Museum, National Archives and USP's Pacific Collection and my consultations with USP's faculty in Chapter 2.

³⁸ Prince Charles arrived in Fiji in 1974 to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the Deed of Cession of 1874. This deed lay the foundation for Fiji's land tenure system by recognizing native Fijians as the first inhabitants of Fiji and guaranteeing them the lion-share of the national acreage.

³⁹ This is a modern variation of the *meke* two-step dance based on European models. Usually danced at night by both sexes, it was said to give rise to immoral behavior (e.g., Capell 1941). Footage of the dance and firewalking during Prince Charles' visit is conserved at the Film and Television Unit's archives in Suva.

⁴⁰ Also involved in the survey were Jesoni Vitusagavulu (now Fiji's Ambassador to the United States), Amelia Ravuvu and Mason Green. Published by the Institute of Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific, the survey covered everything from physical geography to history and socio-economic organization. The report dedicates eleven pages to Sawau's *vilavilavevo* and includes recent and rare images of the ceremony.

Oram, a Master's degree student from Cambridge's Jesus College. My research would have constituted the fifth time for him to be engaged in ethnographic fieldwork on Beqa, which may be why I will never forget his "Oh, no...not again" expression when he discovered me sitting in front of his house in Rukua village for the first time.

Mali Voi with the UNESCO office in Apia kindly introduced me to Adi Meretui Ratunabuabua at the Department of Culture and Heritage.⁴¹ The daughter of a chief of Vunamoli village who had entered a military career and moved to Surrey, England, then returned to Fiji with a specific interest in cultural management. I called her the same day I arrived in Fiji. I remember that I could barely hear her voice: a band was playing in the back. She was attending a reception at Epeli Hau'ofa's Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture for the release of a Fiji and Solomon island music fusion CD. Few minutes later, I was on my way up to the Oceania Centre's big *bure* on Lauhala campus, to meet her. By the time Sailasa Cakau Tora and his inspired Solomon Islands musicians left the stage, she corroborated that Fiji was seeking to develop policies regarding recording cultural knowledge, upholding the rights of indigenous people, and increasing community awareness of cultural heritage management. Fiji's legislative framework for conserving both its tangible and intangible cultural heritage was reflected in revisions of the Pacific Regional Framework for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture. Developed in 2002, it was comprised of the Pacific Model Law that established a new range of statutory rights for traditional owners of folklore. Mere later introduced me to the Director of the Department of Culture and Heritage, Peni Cavuilagi.

In the same building that houses the Department of Culture and Heritage is

⁴¹ 'Adi' is the honorific for women of rank.

located the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture). The institute was originally founded in 1986 by a resolution of the Great Council of Chiefs (held in Somosomo village on Gau Island) to conduct the Fijian Dictionary Project.⁴² Among the objectives of the institute is to produce a monolingual Fijian dictionary, research and document topics encompassing indigenous Fijian language and culture, and disseminate its findings in the form of radio broadcasts, publications and audio-visual materials.⁴³ I was also introduced to the Director of the Institute, Misiwaini Qereqeretabua, and Sipiriano Nemani, Acting Senior Administrative Officer. Nemani, who is currently Acting Director of the Institute, was then Project Officer for the daunting *Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki* (National Inventory on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture), which was scheduled to start in May 2005.

A demand for applied visual anthropology stemmed from the Institute of Fijian Language and Culture (Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage, Provincial Development) which funded and housed *The Sawau Project: An Indigenous Response to the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Beqa*. Produced in May 2005 on behalf of the Sawau tribe, it was a pilot project intended to document indigenous cultural expressions as part of the national inventory. As discussed in Chapter 8, I ended up directing *The Sawau Project*, something that may not be so unusual whenever anthropologists feel a responsibility to support projects established by non-western, post-colonial groups.

Three months after my arrival in Beqa, my research on firewalking was officially

⁴² The project was formerly directed by Paul Geraghty.

⁴³ The *Volavosa Vakaviti* (monolingual Fijian dictionary) contains more than 24,000 entries. The first edition has been approved by the Great Council of Chiefs and is currently being edited for publication (2007).

approved at many different social and institutional levels.⁴⁴

Mobility, Multivocality and Methodology in Meta-Locale Fieldwork

Locating the Local in the Global

A decade ago, scholars such as Marcus (1995), Gupta & Ferguson (1997), Fog-Olwig & Hastrup (1997), and Clifford (1997) critiqued ethnographic practices, pointing to the ideological underpinnings and empirical exclusions embedded in the notions surrounding traditional fieldwork premised on long term residence in a single site (see Mand 2005). They stressed that the way research is framed and designed and how the object of investigation is chosen must take into consideration the contemporary world system and interdisciplinary realities. More recently, Merry (2006) has argued that in the context of discussions of transnationalism, ‘local’ tends to stand for a lack of mobility, wealth, education and cosmopolitanism, whereas ‘global’ encompasses the ability to move across borders, to adopt universal moral frameworks. However, she points out, “clearly, the cluster of ideas evoked by *local* and *global* goes far beyond spatial referents. Their wider array of meanings is relevant to understanding the process of localizing human rights” (Merry 2006: 40).⁴⁵

I believe that fieldwork has played and continues to play a central disciplining function in anthropology. Without undermining the function of “deep hanging out” (Rosaldo 1994, quoted in Clifford 1997: 188) or “intensive dwelling” (Clifford, 1997:

⁴⁴ The title for the project in Fiji: *Vakadidike me baleta na vilavilairevo* kei Guido C. Pigliasco Turaga ni Itali mai na Univesiti mai Hawai‘i.

⁴⁵ A new generation of researchers have recently returned from the field with similar concerns. Kanwal Mand (2005), for example, writes about the problems and possibilities of doing beyond-the-single-site research on Punjabi Sikh women in Tanzania, Punjab and in East and West London. Ingie Hovland (2005) struggles to define her fieldsite while conducting research in a Norwegian Christian mission and development NGO.

190), I think that multilocale research not only brings more angles of vision that allow the researcher to juxtapose, compare, and change perspective in the course of fieldwork. On the other hand, I agree with Clifford when he says that ‘multilocale fieldwork’ is an oxymoron. He asks, “How many sites can be studied intensively, before criteria of ‘depth’ are compromised?” (Clifford 1997: 190).⁴⁶ Both Marcus (1995: 100) and Clifford (1997: 190) prefer to use the term ‘multilocale ethnography’, suggesting a manifestly interdisciplinary orientation, while retaining certain recognizable anthropological features. This allows the ethnographer to conduct fieldwork in several ‘linked’ sites while conserving the notion of a single, albeit mobile, community.

In the course of my fieldwork on the island of Beqa, I instinctively rejected the concept of spatially bounded fields. At the same time I found myself preserving traditional practices long associated with anthropological fieldwork. I refused the paradoxical argument that “the field is everywhere” (D’Amico-Samuels 1991: 83), which would involve a radical dissolution of the concept of fieldwork *per se*. In ultimate analysis, ethnography has to claim authority on the basis of having been ‘there’, not ‘everywhere’. As Geertz clarified, “anthropologists don’t study villages (tribes, towns, neighborhoods...); they study *in* villages” (Geertz 1973: 22). During my stay in the chiefly village of Dakuibeqa, I felt that the ‘tent in the village’, to use a popular metaphor from the discipline, tends in practice to be decentered and displaced by contemporary ‘heterodoxical’ fieldwork practices. If fieldworkers are to conduct research at multiple sites, they must do more than demonstrate random interdependencies. They inevitably formulate hypotheses related to theoretical dilemmas such as: How is the present

⁴⁶ Criteria of ‘depth’ in the fieldwork milieu generally involve length of stay, grasp of language, mode of interaction and repeated visits to a specific community.

produced? And what is the present producing? I term my methodological approach ‘meta-locale’ because it draws together multiple disciplines while moving beyond multiple locations.

While my research was primarily conducted in the chiefly village of Dakuibeqa on Beqa in Fiji from November 2004 to July 2005, it also followed the social and organizational physical movements of the Sawau community to the other five Sawau villages on Beqa, to some of the other islands where members of the Sawau *yavusa* have moved and intermarried, to several hotels in Beqa, Ugaga, and Viti Levu, where they perform firewalking, and finally to the capitol of Suva, where the Tui Sawau and his family reside and where the country’s governmental, tourism and religious headquarters are located. Only by following the people, their performances, and their relationships to “blindly interdependent locales” (Marcus & Fisher 1999: 171), was I able to gain a better understanding of the ways in which culture, heritage, identities and policies are negotiated and formed in Beqa.

Archives

I started archival research in January 2002 at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Pacific Collection and at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. I went to Fiji and Tahiti from July to August 2002 to do archival work at the Université de la Polynésie Française, where I compared data on the *umu tī* (Raiatean firewalking ceremony). Between August 2003 and August 2004 I continued archival research at the University of Hawai‘i Hamilton Library and at the Richardson Law School Library, where I focused on topics of indigenous and intellectual cultural property. At my arrival in Fiji in November 2004, I obtained access to the Fiji Museum Library, the National Archives and the Pacific

Collection of the University of the South Pacific. By the time I left Fiji in 2005, my three year archival research had uncovered more than two hundred publications solely on firewalking in Fiji and Oceania dating back to 1850s. The entire collection was photocopied and donated to the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture).⁴⁷

During my residence in Suva's Government Quarters on and off from April through July 2005⁴⁸, I collected a large amount of governmental, supranational, and non-governmental organizational documents, in particular from UNESCO, UNCTAD, UNCITRAL, WIPO, WHO, ACCU, PIFS, SPC, WWF-SPPO, SIDS, and COE.⁴⁹ These included text sources on *sui generis* based intellectual property rights protection and drafts of the Pacific Model Law. In October 2005, I researched archives at the UNESCO Headquarters library at the Place de Fontanoy in Paris and at the Bibliothèque du Musée de l'Homme. On my way back to Honolulu, I was admitted to the New York University Law Library housing one of the largest intellectual property and international law collections in the world. I returned there for additional research in February 2006 after a visit to the Melanesian Studies Resource Center at the University of California, San Diego. All bibliographic entries from archival research were organized using EndNote 9 software.

⁴⁷ See the letter of acceptance in Appendix B.

⁴⁸ My residence at the Government Quarters was possible thanks to an invitation from Mr. Takashige Isoyama, one of the JOVC (Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers) of JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) in Fiji.

⁴⁹ See List of Abbreviations.

Participant observation

The path of fieldwork is not always straight.⁵⁰ Although fieldwork is considered a game of chance by those who have played it deeply, the fieldworker must always sample carefully from the community, the people, and the households he or she will be relying upon for the research. Only strong participation in community life and involvement in personal relationships and demystifying anthropological and, in my case, legal knowledge allows the fieldworker to recognize which accounts are deliberately left out by the group and which instead are favored and emphasized. Key details take time to emerge, for sensible information may remain covered over by social rules as the group spontaneously directs the flow of events (Agar 1996: 159). The inevitable transience of the ethnographer's relatively brief stay is believed to make his or her participation neither as committed nor as constrained as the native's (Karp & Kendall 1982). Nevertheless, sharing everyday life with members of the Sawau *yavusa* allowed me to enter into their matrix of meanings, participate in their system of organized activities and, as outlined below, become subject to their code of ethical and moral regulation. In my case, participating in the daily activities of the village, fishing, hiking, praying, drinking kava and commuting to Navua, Suva or the hotels gave me access to their lived experience, crucial to cementing rapport and collaborative relationships. It eventually helped me to see things as nearly as possible as they see them, in order to discover what the right questions should be.⁵¹

⁵⁰ A pun on: Katz, Richard. 1993. *The Straight Path: A Story of Healing and Transformation in Fiji*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

⁵¹ I was fortunate to have the patient Samuela Vakuruivalu and his family and Bulou Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga and her son Ratu Felix Colatanavanua (respectively sister and cousin of the Tui Sawau) socialize me into Beqa culture; their voices will emerge chapter by chapter. 'Bulou' is a

Becoming an integral part of the chiefly village of Dakuibeqa on Beqa Island meant attending village meetings, functions and ceremonies, church services, participating in daily activities, making visits to neighboring Sawau villages, and traveling with the firewalker groups to hotels and resorts in Viti Levu where the firewalking ceremony is performed every week. I attended weekly firewalker meetings, taking detailed notes, drawing sketches of the spatial arrangements of bodies in formal settings, filming, or taking photographs. I focused on any issues related to the firewalking practice, noting name and status of the participants, meeting patterns, dynamics of discussion and key terms. When I was unable to attend a meeting, I spoke to Samu, Marika, Bulou Ro Mereani or her son Felix, or any other individual who had attended to ascertain their opinions and descriptions of the meeting.⁵²

The other regular site of participant observation was at informal *yaqona* (kava) drinking circles. In Fiji, this is an everyday event. Kava-drinking sessions are principal sites of social interaction in the village: the *yaqona* stimulates good talk and the conversations during kava-drinking are their *raison d'être* (Tomlinson 2004). Arno (1993) shows how these circles of talk reveal culturally constituted representations of the social reality of deference and hierarchy in a Fijian village.

In Suva I attended four main cultural events: 1) “Celebrating World Intellectual Property Day 2005: Think, Imagine, Create,” sponsored by the Office of the Attorney General and The Ministry of Justice (April 27, 2005); 2) “Training Workshop on Field Research Methodology Designed for Cultural Mapping Field Officers,” launched by the

title of rank before names of female members of a chiefly family.

⁵² In a Fijian village, multiple gatherings at various locations occur at the same time, especially after dark (see Arno’s 1993 description of kava networks).

Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture) on behalf of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture, Heritage and Provincial Development (May 17-20, 2005); 3) “Dialogue on Pacific Experiences and Perspectives on the Use and Ownership of Genes,” organized by Call of the Earth – Llamado de la Tierra, with a keynote address by Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (June 6-8, 2005); and 4) “Protection of Genetic Resources and Cultural Heritage of Fiji Workshop,” co-sponsored by the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage and Regional Development and WWF-South Pacific Programme (June 21-22, 2005).

In addition, I had the privilege to attend several meetings at the headquarters of the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture). Three of these meetings required me to pay particular attention to the multivocality local, national, and transnational of this study.

On May 2, 2005, I participated in a roundtable on local eco-tourism solutions instigated by Mr. Marika Kuilamu and Mrs. Rusieli Mua on the board of the ecotourism and sustainable development section of the Ministry of Tourism. Also at the roundtable were Ms. Unaisi Nawalowalo, a lecturer at USP, who had just completed a thesis on eco-tourism and entrepreneurship in Fiji, and Ratu Felix Colatanavanua, who presented on behalf of the Sawau *yavusa* the Beqa Eco-Cultural Tours preliminary project discussed in Chapter 5.

On May 10, 2005, I participated in another roundtable, “Intellectual Property Rights Discussion,” co-hosted by the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture) and the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture, Heritage and Provincial Development. Present were the Assistant Minister of Culture and Heritage,

Mrs. Nanise Nagusuca and Mr. Rupeni Nawakaquta, a lawyer and First Parliamentary Counsel in charge of the revision of the Pacific Model Law.⁵³ This meeting, along with the discussion about *sui generis* protection of intellectual property, is discussed in Chapter 7.

On July 12, 2005, I participated in a roundtable on recent trends in tourism in Fiji, along with Ratu Felix Colatanavanua, Ms. Unaisi Nawalowalo and Mr. Josefa Tuamoto, Head of Marketing of the FVB (Fiji Visitors Bureau). This meeting is discussed in Chapter 5. All these meetings were tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim and translated.

Interviews

When in 2000 I joined the graduate program in anthropology, I left behind a ten-year law practice. While I was still in law school I was working as a free-lance journalist. I had to relearn how to interview people as an anthropologist. I had the advantages of being adaptable, vigilant about my bias, and able to follow up ideas, probe responses, and investigate motives and feelings. I did not rely on surveys, questionnaires and structured interviews, which seemed inappropriate in Fiji's cultural milieu. However, I used schedules, checklists and note-taking during the interviews, covering a list of topics and confining each interview to a pre-established framework. I call this 'in-depth' rather than 'semi-structured' interviewing because it allowed me to keep the discourse open-ended while at the same time following a general script. Unstructured interviewing works very well when someone lives with close informants and is committed to long-term fieldwork

⁵³ Mrs. Nagusuca's position was revoked after the coup of December 5, 2006, which deposed the Qarase government. On January 15, 2007, Ratu Epeli Ganilau was sworn in as Minister for Fijian Affairs, Heritage, Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs by the interim Cabinet formed in the wake of the military coup.

(see Bernard 2002: 206).

In Fiji, self-narratives emerge not just in a single telling, but in a series of narrations, sometime more spontaneous than those provoked during recorded sessions. In some cases, as with university faculty, lawyers or government personnel, I ran preliminary interviews on the phone or in person to give the interviewees a precise idea about what topics the interview would touch upon. In two cases, I was asked to send my questions beforehand and specify how long the interviews would last.

Although my agenda optimistically included gathering five life-stories, I ended up completing three. I chose Manua Laveta (1942-2005) for his innate, ironic, synchronic perspective; he helped me understand Sawau life and the implications of *vilavilavevo*. Manua Laveta enjoyed enormously the taping, always performing as if he had an imaginary audience in front of him. Unfortunately, he contracted a painful illness and passed away just before my departure from Dakuibeqa. I also collected the life history of Sevanaia Waqasaqa (1916-2007), the *bete levu* or traditional 'high priest' of Dakuibeqa, who has recently passed away. For ninety years, he never abandoned his village. He brought a lucid, blunt, diachronic perspective, shedding light on the mutations *vilavilavevo* has undergone during his lifetime. Sevanaia developed an antipathy for the tape recorder at our third hour of taping and complained to Mika and me that he was sick and tired of repeating details about his life.

My most precious consultant was Samu Vakuruivalu, who made me an integral part of his family. He is one of the most respected figures in the village and in his *mataqali* (Naivilaqata) he is a *bete* (priest) descended in a lineage of *dauvila* (firewalkers). Formal interviews were not the best way to obtain information from Samu.

He never liked talking in front of a microphone, a camcorder, or even when my notebook was casually open by my side. His utterances then became pointillistic, in other words, reticent. On the other hand, in the course of the day traveling and living together, Samu was generous in disclosing any information related to my research, answering my tormenting questions and warning me of cultural faux-pas. With Samu, I experimented with a subtler life story technique that was unprovoked, unrecorded, and consisted of gradually filling in details on his family and childhood in Beqa. Samu's role in the multimedia *The Sawau Project* is apparent in the segment visually depicting his intimacy with the *vilavilairevo*, as the camera follows him through the thick forest of Beqa to the source of his clan's gift.

In the course of my research, I collected 150 interviews.⁵⁴ Fifty percent were tape-recorded. I also took extensive notes that allowed me to supplement verbal accounts with contextual details. Interviews were conducted either in Fijian or English.⁵⁵ All interviews were transcribed and translated with the help of my student assistant, Laisiasa Cavakiqali,⁵⁶ and the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language

⁵⁴ Some participants were interviewed on more than one occasion. Among the 150 interviews there are also several brief interactions and personal communications. The interviews amount to thirty-four tapes for a total of 3.50GB once digitized and compressed in mp3 format. See Appendix A for a list of all the interviews.

⁵⁵ While in Beqa, Standard Fijian known as 'Bauan' (*vosa vakabau*) was mainly used when interviewing elders and dignitaries. The Beqan dialect is similar to the Bauan dialect, adopted in Fiji as the official language (Geraghty 1983, 1994). My conversations with Ratu Felix Colatanavanua, who spent fifteen years in Canada; his mother, Bulou Ro Mereani Taumatanisiga, who lives part of the year in England with her husband, Professor Hamilton-Jones; Adi Meretui Ratunabuabua, who has also lived in England; and several government, Methodist Church and tourist industry officials were conducted in English. In the village, I practiced my Fijian with Samu and his sister Salanieta Davutu, who is a school teacher at the Sawau District School in Dakuibeqa. While in Suva, I attended second level courses offered by the Alliance Française de Suva, taught by Savaira Tuberi.

⁵⁶ I hired Laisiasa Cavakiqali, a student of Susanne Pohler in the Marine Studies Programme, for his excellent mapping skills and to transcribe tapes for me. Laisiasa spent the two-month Christmas break with his brother in Naceva, a village in Beqa half an hour walk from Dakuibeqa,

and Culture). This way I was able to test gradually if the hypotheses advanced were or were not supported by the evidence. These interviews will be drawn upon in various ways throughout the dissertation. In total, all 150 interviews' transcripts generated more than 550 typed pages. This large amount of text was stored and organized in two different ways.

- a. Alphabetical order: last name followed by the first name of the interviewee;; the year; the type (e.g., structured interview, unstructured interview, informal interview); the source (e.g., tape, video, notes); the date (or multiple dates) of the interview; keywords (e.g., firewalker, tourist, government officer); notes (e.g., name of the village, age); image (a photograph of each interviewee); transcription of the entire interview in the original language (Fijian or English). For those in Fijian language an English translation was also included. Employing EndNote 9 software, set in the mode 'Figure', allowed me flexibility in inserting the names of the people interviewed.
- b. Chronological order: all the transcripts were organized using Microsoft Word, starting from my first interview with Grand Prêtre Raymond Teriirooterai Arioi Graffe in Rarotonga in 1992 to the present. This allowed me to 'match' the interviews to the notes I was jotting daily and to the diary I kept with the names of the people interviewed.

during which time he applied his topographic skills to our cultural re-mapping activities (discussed in Chapter 8). He was particularly helpful with the transcription and interpretation of Beqan archaisms and dialectal differences that emerged during interviews with Sawau elders. He turned out to be a great research assistant. By the time I left Fiji, Susanne Pohler told me that he would be the first student in Fiji to successfully complete a BSc in Marine Studies in only three years. Mr. Sipiriano Nemani, currently Acting Director of the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture) helped me translate the tapes, while Ms. Kelera Adi Kakua helped transcribe them.

In addition, transcribed and translated material was analyzed with askSam-6, a flexible way to organize information and create searchable databases from texts, Word documents, PDF files, Email and Web pages. I developed concepts and analytic insights through examination of the transcribed texts in order to test hypotheses and open up avenues of enquiry. My aim was not to pre-establish categories; rather I identified recurrent, revealing issues in the transcripts that could become the basis of categorization later on.

Since one of the purposes of this study is to look at the structure and history of Beqa and ascertain genealogical descent in order to establish rightful, exclusive ownership over cultural property, personal names have been used in this study unless participants specifically requested their names be omitted. The kinship data for the Naivilakata *mataqali* (the *bete*'s clan, custodians of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony) were organized using GenoPro-Gold and successively GenoPro 2007, which allowed me to insert digital pictures for most of the members of the Sawau *yavusa*.⁵⁷ Two hundred and seventy-five individuals covering nine generations were inscribed in the Naivilakata *mataqali* genealogical chart.

To ensure confidentiality for the Sawau *yavusa* members (and Fijian government officials) interviewed, all the tapes were donated, catalogued and conserved at the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture) before my departure from Fiji.⁵⁸ No one else except the transcribers and myself had listened to them. However, any participant in this study or descendent of a participant, any *turaga ni*

⁵⁷ See Appendix C for a printout of the Naivilakata genealogical chart. Individuals' pictures are visible only on screen.

⁵⁸ See Appendix B for the letter of acceptance of donation from the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture, Heritage and Provincial Development.

mataqali or member of the *yavusa* Sawau can access the collection by asking permission from the Institute, which acts as a ‘cultural custodian’ (see letter of acceptance Appendix B).

Audio-visual recordings

My previous experience in visual representations and documentation in the field led me to carry a compact double-duty camcorder that could shoot both stills and video.⁵⁹ I took hundreds of stills and about ten hours of video footage. I applied this montage of the multi-media material (photo, audio and video) in the field to a visual anthropology project. As director of *The Sawau Project*, I had to establish new methodologies and ethical protocols specific to the project. Visually documenting cultural practices in order to communicate ‘anthropological’ material and theories to the general public entails intervention and collaboration between the ethnographer and the indigenous community. For more detail on the scope of this project, see Chapter 8.

Chapter Outline

The rapid succession of events that followed my arrival in Fiji, outlined in this chapter, provides an appropriate opening to discussions of crucial issues in the ethnographic craft today. I attempt to demonstrate the power of narrative in interpreting social relations and that the persuasive force of the ethnographic text derives also from the interplay of concrete exemplifications—saturated with fieldnotes—and discursive commentary (see Atkinson 1990: 103). Every chapter therefore commences with a brief

⁵⁹ I worked as a writer, consultant in a two season film-documentary production in the Cook Islands and Papua New Guinea between October 1992 and October 1993 for R.T.I. Mediaset, where ten film-documentaries were completed.

anecdote, then moves back and forth between specific events recounted in my fieldnotes and more general concepts.

A month before leaving for Fiji, I prepared an agenda outlining three different analytical perspectives: historical-hermeneutic, performative-aesthetic and legal-commodificative. These different approaches are reflected in the structure of the dissertation as follows.

The historical-hermeneutic approach is addressed in Chapters 2 and 3, in which I demonstrate that from its apparent point of origin on Beqa, the practice of firewalking has spread to other locations in Fiji. It has even been performed in foreign venues such as India, New Zealand, and Hawai‘i through state sponsored tours. The last forty years represent a period of documented ritual transformation. Looking at changes to the ritual made it necessary to establish its early historical meanings as clearly as possible. Persuasive arguments drawn from archival and early historical accounts offer new insights into the origins of Fijian firewalking and its relations to Polynesian firewalking ceremonies such as the Tahitian *umu tī* ritual.

A major issue of my research on ritual performance in Fiji concerns the elucidation of the hierarchical role of both Christian religion and tourism in Fiji in controlling, validating, and re-negotiating the firewalking performances. Chapters 4 and 5 show that the ethnographic analysis is becoming complicated by the fact that in an age of globalization traditional cultural expressions are becoming integrated into the global capitalist system and are influenced to conform to western ways of thinking and acting. In particular, Chapter 5 employs a performative-aesthetic approach in analyzing the performers’ and the audience members’ dialogic understanding of the aesthetic cosmos,

traditional and modern, that gives the firewalking performance meaning. In general, the aesthetic domain of art and ritual represent a relatively clear instance of a two-way dialog, however unequal in degree of impact, between traditional and modern cultural systems.

In the Chapters 6 and 7, I address legal-commodificative issues. Issues of law and international policies intertwine with local realities and practices. Three interconnected layers local, national and transnational, are located and discussed as dialogically engaged ethnographic material. On Beqa, cultural, religious, social and economic relations have become more global over time through integration of markets and the rapid spread of technologies, which are redefining concepts of identity, self-determination, public domain and the legitimacy of international institutions, reflecting a hierarchy of power at the international level and the impact that legal regulation of traditional cultural expressions has on the globalized legal system itself. The application of legal practices and concepts to traditional cultural expressions has challenged modern law to recognize new forms of property. Specifically, the issues of cultural property, cultural heritage and commodification have recently re-emerged at different local, regional and international levels with Fiji's National Inventory Project and Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill, the 'Pacific Model Law' 2002, and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted by UNESCO in 2003.

In Chapter 8, I discuss the genesis of *The Sawau Project* which was supported by a grant from the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage. The project started at my arrival in Beqa as a school project right after my arrival in 2004. I realized that the concerns were not confined to the children's customs oblivion, but were deeply informed

in the Sawau's identity, in the form of misuse, misrepresentation, and misappropriation of their cultural heritage. The project looks beyond the ongoing debates about documentation and the boundaries between western intellectual property regimes and customary laws. In the form of a multimedia, menu-driven story-map DVD, the project aims to telescope Sawau's heritage encouraging a *sui generis* protection. Not a documentary, but merely a montage of documents, the project creates an inventory of sites, stories and shared memories of the Sawau people. *The Sawau Project* listens to the native agenda, allows control and allows for the dynamic and metacultural nature of the intangible cultural heritage it records. *The Sawau Project*, represents a 'crossover' between applied visual and legal anthropology, a form of social intervention *in situ*, a *sui generis* rhizomatic approach to intangible cultural property strategies for positive protection, and a reflexive tool to encourage research capability, pedagogical visual methodologies, linkages and institutional collaborations among Fijian communities. Chapter 8 shows that ethnographic projects cannot distance themselves from considering and engaging the multiple ideas, local voices, agendas, and interests that produce contemporary ethnography.

In Chapter 9, I recapitulate this complex work of disentanglement of the intertwined topics of property, commodification, tradition and change on the Fijian island of Beqa. Traditional knowledge, expressions of culture, property and commodification are clearly social, dynamic and often codified in forms that may be culturally specific and difficult to access. Recognizing their value may require new forms of intellectual and legal discourse. The movement of new legal ideas and practices in an era of global interconnections represents a real challenge for the modern ethnographer, in terms of

following the agency, architecture and effects of these chronocentric ideas and practices.

Conclusion

This chapter intentionally and provocatively depicted scenarios and unforeseen situations, unpredictable despite a meticulous agenda and rigorous methodologies established to attempt to get funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The problem in designing a research project is how to follow the conventions of ethnography for ‘unconventional’ purposes, sites and subjects, particularly moving beyond the settled community as a site of fieldwork toward dispersed phenomena that challenge the way that classic ethnography has been framed and persuades. In his *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*, through which I sharpened my methodological tools, Marcus (1998) offers examples such as shifting attention in a single study from Italian villagers to the multinational European Parliament, or from a Japanese factory to the international fashion industry. I believe that this study will provide a unique approach to understanding the human situation and social change in Beqa through what I envisioned as a humanistic, collaborative ethnography rather than a ‘scientific enterprise’ that vests the social scientist with hierarchical control over the ethnographic text.

While I was still in Fiji, my dissertation advisor, Professor Andrew Arno, forwarded me the review of my project from the National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant Advisory Panel. The main reason for non-funding appeared to be that the project was not set up as a *scientific* study. I cannot disagree with that statement. Russell Bernard once argued that “to explore if King Lear is to be pitied as a pathetic leader or admired as a successful one is an exercise in seeking humanistic

knowledge. The answer to the question cannot possibly be achieved by the scientific method” (Bernard 2002: 21).⁶⁰ Following Bernard’s lesson, I think that finding *the* answer to the questions related to issues of cultural property and ritual commodification in Beqa is not important. What is important is *examining* these questions and producing many possible answers through a humanistically informed science and a problem-oriented ethnographic methodology capable of permitting insight into human experience.

The study of the social and statutory implications of the Fijian firewalking ceremony can be used as a model of research design that could be eventually applied to other traditional ritual performances throughout Oceania, showing similar characteristics (intentionality, non-obligatory aspects, individual or group motivations, peril and bravery, association with myth) and symptoms of transformation (for purposes of the state or tourism, commodification, deterritorialization, misappropriation, spectacularization, glamorization, and eventually competition). This dissertation contributes to interpretative strategies that help describe the rite's phenomenology and metamorphosis, identify its underlying structures, performative utterances, socio-economic functions, and historical precedents. This dissertation intends to be of interest not just to Fijian area specialists, but to contribute more widely to anthropological studies of ritual, folklore, performance, tourism and indigenous cultural property rights, focusing on their impact upon local communities and practices in Fiji and in the contemporary Pacific.

⁶⁰ Russell Bernard is director of the National Science Foundation’s Short Courses on Research Methods Program.

CHAPTER 2

History of *Na Vilavilairevo* the Fijian firewalking ceremony

Introduction: Archives as Fieldsites

On the island of Bequa [sic], just across from Suva, the natives are willing to oblige the curious or those bent on scientific investigation almost on demand. Any scientist is free to investigate. (Long 1936: 22)

Fijian firewalking (*vilavilairevo*, lit. ‘jumping into the oven’) belongs to one of those topics haphazardly pillaged and investigated by scientists, psychologists, theologians, missionaries, travel writers and journalists. This traditional cultural expression owned by the Naivilaqata clan of the Sawau tribe of Beqa, has been often misconceived and misrepresented, with the result of a degradation and destitution of their beliefs and actions. Building on Gananath Obeyesekere’s (1992, 1998, 2005) critique of western discourses on savagery and on Finney’s (2003, 1999) discussion of cultural exchange and renaissance in the Pacific region, I show that a combination of archival and ethnographic research on *vilavilairevo* can correct historical dogmatism and lead the way to historical and anthropological consciousness.

Margaret Jolly said that “history without anthropology is blind, and anthropology without history is crippled”.⁶¹ One of my first concerns in the course of my ethnography was to collect and make sense of all the records written about the *vilavilairevo*. I believe that an ‘ethnography in the archives’, is a constitutive and not supplementary activity of the historical ethnographic process (Merry 2004: 128; Des Chene 1997). Des Chene

⁶¹ The University of Hawai‘i Pacific Islands Studies Fall Conference: Learning Oceania, UHM Korean Studies Center, Honolulu, Hawai‘i 13 November 2003.

argues that the archives contain extraordinary possibilities. Like hers, my research on *vilavilavevo* has ranged across more than 150 years. “Historical research illuminates the many links between places we have thought of as ‘the field’ and those that we have not imagined in this way” (Des Chene 1997: 81).

In this chapter, I present a historical-hermeneutical reconstruction of the firewalking ceremony in Fiji and Oceania based on the archival material I collected.⁶² The clues left behind by disparate sources allowed me to investigate the degree to which rituals are fixed systems standing alone or the extent to which they are embedded in other cultural traditions and affected by changing social practices. Over the last forty years, ritual transformation in *vilavilavevo* has been well-documented. However, in examining both ownership of and change in ritual, two issues central to my study, it is necessary to establish the early historical meanings of the ceremony as clearly as possible. Early historical accounts offer new insights on the origins of Fijian firewalking and its relation to other Polynesian firewalking ceremonies such as the Tahitian *umu tī*.

Between 2002 and 2006, I collected more than two hundred references ranging over more than 150 years on Beqa and Sawau history and the firewalking ceremony in Beqa and Oceania (see Appendix D).⁶³ I organized the archives into ten categories:

⁶² Philological issues are often inseparable from issues of hermeneutical interpretation. Archival ethnography and archival philology go hand in hand when trying to reconstruct an ancient author’s original text based on variant manuscript copies as was the case of missionary accounts in Fiji.

⁶³ Archival fieldwork started in January 2002 in Hawai‘i at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Pacific Collection and the Bishop Museum Library and Archives. In August 2002, I examined archives at the Polynesian Collection of Université de la Polynésie Française in Tahiti. I collected texts at the Fiji Museum Library, Fiji National Archives and the Pacific Collection of the University of the South Pacific in Suva throughout my fieldwork in Fiji. In October, 2005, I visited the UNESCO Headquarters Library at Place de Fontanoy and the Bibliothèque du Musée de l’Homme in Paris. I conducted research at the Melanesian Studies Resource Center at the University of California, San Diego in February 2006 and visited the New York University Law

missionary accounts, colonial accounts, antiquities and early scholarship, cognitive and physiological analyses, local news, travel and tourist literature, visual recordings, archaeology and ethnobotany, anthropology of tourism, and general cultural anthropology. Archives in each category are listed in Tables 2.1-2.10 below.

The missionary accounts (Table 2.1) provide the foundation for reconstructing the history of the advent of Christianity in Beqa and its affect on customary practices, including changes in the *vilavilairevo* ceremony. Particularly relevant are: Reverend Calvert's 1839 journal; the account of the *italanoa* (story, legend) of the 'Great Flood' that spared Beqa, collected by Reverend Williams (1982[1858]) and Father de Marzan (1972[ca 1891-1925]); and the first description of *vilavilairevo* in Beqa reported by Reverend Waterhouse (1997[1866]). Reverend Hammond's (1924) account from Aotearoa shows similarities to *vilavilairevo*.⁶⁴

Library to do research on indigenous intellectual property rights in October 2005 and February and November 2006.

⁶⁴ Reverend Hammond's account brings insights on the similarities between the *vilavilairevo* ceremony and the first fruit firewalking ceremony performed in the 19th century by the Maori in a locale curiously named Temuka, apparently a contraction of Te Umukaha, meaning 'fierce oven'.

Missionary accounts	Year
Cargill, (David) (ed. Schütz)	1977[1832-1843]
Cargill (Margaret) (ed. D. Cargill)	1841
Calvert (ed. Birchall)	1987[1838-1855]
Calvert	1985[1858]
Hammond	1924
de Marzan	1908

de Marzan	1972a[ca1891-1925]
de Marzan	1972b[ca1891-1925]
de Marzan (ed/trans. Thomas)	1987[1907-1913]
Jaggar (ed. Crosby)	1988[1839-40]
Rougier	1972[ca1891-1925]
Waterhouse	1997[1866]
Williams	1982[1858]
Williams (ed. Henderson)	1931

Table 2.1

The accounts of colonial officials (Table 2.2) represents an embryonic touristic gaze of Fijian customs, beliefs and practices, including the *vilavilairevo* ceremony in Beqa. Brewster's (1967[1922]) report on the 'hill tribes' of Viti Levu inspired several early visitors and anthropologists (*inter alia* Kaplan 1988, 1990, 1994, 1995, 2004; Spencer 1941; Thomson, 1969[1908]). Thomson's (Thomson 1894: 196, 201) and Lindt's (1893: 50, 56) spontaneous accounts of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony they witnessed in Beqa on September 1, 1892 confirm the fundamental role of the *Cordyline* in the ceremony. They were invited to attend the ceremony by Major Harding and the Governor Thurston.⁶⁵ Haggard's (1903[1802]) remarks demonstrate that *vilavilairevo* ceremony had not become a public tourist attraction until 1902. Tebetebe's accounts collected in the *Tukutuku Raraba*, undoubtedly of great historical value, are included under 'colonial accounts' since they were shaped by his encounter with the orthodoxy of the colonial officer who recorded his stories (as argued in Chapter 3).

⁶⁵ Interestingly, both 1885 and 1892 performances of the ceremony were held at Nawaisomo village (Raviravi land), indexing the interrelationship among the two tribes Sawau and Raviravi in Beqa (see Chapter 3).

Colonial accounts	Year
Allardyce	1904a
Allardyce	1904b
Allardyce	1904c
Brewster	1967[1922]
Burns	1963
Erschine	1987[1853]
Gardner	1921
Gudgeon	1899
Large	1911
Haggard	1903[1902]
Tebetebe	1927
Thomson	1894
Thomson	1895
Tuinaceva	1875
Wilkes	1945[1845]

Table 2.2

Antiquities and early scholarly accounts' (Table 2.3), include a wide range of ethnographies and reports from various people who witnessed or analyzed the firewalking ceremony including the use of the *Cordyline* plant earth oven in Fiji and Oceania.⁶⁶ They examine the ceremony from different scholarly angles, including discussions on folklore, religion, psychology and history.

⁶⁶ The Latin name *Cordyline* come from the Greek "*kordyle*", a club, referring to the plant's large and fleshy roots. The most wide-ranging of the *Cordylines* is the *Cordyline terminalis*, probably native to east Asia (Fankhauser 1987: 4). According to Fankhauser (ibid.), the *Cordyline* has been often confused with species of dracaena, also of the Agavaceae (Asparagales) family. The difference is that *Cordyline*'s creeping rootstock shows three large bracts at its base. The *Cordyline* plant is known as *tī* in Huahine-Ra'iātea and *masawe* in Beqa.

Antiquities and early scholarship	Year
Banks	1963[1896]
Best	1902
Best	1924
Buck	1930
Buck	1959[1938]
Buck	1957
Bettelheim	1954
Chapple	1921
<i>CF</i>	1907
Cook (ed. Beaglehole)	1999(1955-1974) {1773,1777,1785}
Coupland-Harding	1899
Davidson	1920
Davidson	1925
Derrick	2001[1946]
Derrick	1965[1951]
de Martino	1973[1948]
Diapera	1928
Edsman	1987
Eisler	1952
Eliade	1974[1951]
Eliade	1967[1957]
Ellis	1853[1829]
Ellis	1963[1917]
Endicott	1923
Erskine	1987[1853]
Fison	1984[1907]
Fornander	1973[1878-1885]
Frazer	1919[1890]
Hames and Pook	nd
Handy	1927
Handy	1930
Handy	1972
Hastwell	1899[1885]
Henry	1893
Henry	1901
Henry	1928
Hocart	1929
Hocart	1937
Hocken	1898
Huguenin	1902
Inez and Hames	1967
Jackson	1894
Jackson	1899
Kenn	1949
Lang	1895

Lang	1900
Lang	1901a
Lang	1901b
Lang	1903
Langley	1901a
Langley	1901b
Lester	1938
Lindt	1893
Malo	1951[1898]
Mannhardt	1875-77
O'Brien	1921
Parham	1943
Paine	1912
Parham	1972
Parkinson	1999[1773]
Portlock	1789
Pukui	1972
Pukui	1989[1975]
Ross-Taylor	1923
Roth	1933
Roth	1936
Roth	1973[1953]
Sasportas	1926
Seemann	1973[1862]
Taylor	1951
Tylor	1958 [1871]
Von Hügel (ed. Roth and Hooper)	1990[1875-1877]
Wallis Davis	1983[1851]
Washburn-Hopkins	1910
<i>WPHO</i>	n.d.[1906?]
Young	1925

Table 2.3

Not all of these scholars actually observed the ceremony themselves, but rather made their analyses based on information supplied by others (e.g., de Martino 1973[1948]; Edsman 1987; Eliade 1974[1951], 1967[1948]; Frazer 1919[1890]; Mannhardt 1875-77). Nevertheless, Frazer's (1919[1890]) and Eliade's⁶⁷ encyclopedic works, written during the early stages of modern studies of mythology and comparative religion, remain thought-provoking.⁶⁸ Lang's (1895, 1900, 1901a, 1901b, 1903) hermeneutical remarks about 'first fruits' in Oceania have sustained ethno-philological interest.⁶⁹ In a letter to Samuel P. Langley, third Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution from 1887 to 1906, Lang writes:

I am glad that *Folk-Lore* is turning its attention to the Fire Walk. Its interest is religious, apart from the problem of the immunity from blisters. In the Oceanic area, the rite appears to be one of the sanctifying of First Fruits. In the Asiatic area the rite, at least some cases, is one of purification. Mr. Frazer suggests that, in ancient Italy, 'the passage of the priests of Soranus through the fire was a magical ceremony designed to procure a due supply of light and warmth for the earth by mimicking the sun's passage across the firmament,' that is, if Soranus (Apollo) was a sun-god (*Golden Bough*, 1890, iii: 312).⁷⁰ I have not observed this magical purpose asserted where the rite is still practiced. Mannhardt [1875-77, II: 318-37] thinks that perhaps the Italian fire-walkers (*Hirpi* – wolves) represented the Corn spirit—not the Sun. This is not the case where the firewalkers have no corn, but perhaps they then represent the *masawe*

⁶⁷ I am referring here at his work as editor-in-chief of Macmillan Publishers' *Encyclopedia of Religion* (1987).

⁶⁸ Scottish social anthropologist Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, first published in 1890, took a modernist, atheoretical approach to religion as a cultural phenomenon.

⁶⁹ Andrew Lang, an honorary fellow of Merton College, was chiefly known for his publications on folklore, mythology, and religion and contributions to anthropology.

⁷⁰ In the classical times, on Mount Soracte in the ancient Falerii Veteres region (today cities of Fiano Romano, Capena, Civita Castellana) the Hirpi-Sorani tribe, cult followers of Apollo Sorano (the cult of Soranus was subsumed by Apollo) walked over hot coals not as part of a competition, but to propitiate the fertility rural goddess Feronia, revering her in order to secure a good harvest (Strabo, XII: 2. 7: 537, V: 2, 9; Servius, [*Aeneid.*] VII: 800, XI, 785-9; Pliny [*Hist. Nat.*] VII: 2, 19; Silius Italicus V: 175; Strabo V: 2, 9; Frazer, 1919[1890]:14; Lang 1901: 288-9; Mannhardt, 1875-77: 327 *sqq*; Ross-Taylor 1923: 83-4). In Roman mythology both Apollo and Feronia were divinities associated to light, sun, crops prosperity, receiving first fruits and propitiatory gifts.

spirit? (Lang 1901: 453)

Derrick's (2001[1946]) history and geography of Fiji, in mentioning the *vilavilavirevo* ceremony intersects with my reconstruction of Beqa's recent past (see Chapter 3). Young's (1925), Handy's (1927, 1930) and Henry's (1893, 1901, 1928) unrivalled narrations of the *umu tī* ceremony in Huahine and Ra'iātea help ascertaining the ceremony's inherent first-fruit, apotropaic nature. Hocken's (1898) vivid account of the *vilavilavirevo* ceremony in Beqa emphasizes the importance of the starchy-sweet *masawe* root in the village economy and the role of the Naivilaqata priestly clan in its ceremonial cooking.⁷¹ He also introduces one of its members, Jonacani Dabea, who Thomson and Lindt met in September 1892, and whose name appears in *Na Mata* (30 Nov. 1885: 2) and in the *Cyclopedia of Fiji* (1907). Remarkably, Jonacani Dabea, described as a Native Stipendiary Magistrate from Rewa (*Turaga-ni-Lewa i Taukei mai Rewa*), became one of the first middle-men and impresarios of the *vilavilavirevo* ceremony in Fiji (see Chapter 5).

The earliest commentators on the cross-cultural phenomenon of fire-walking speculated about the body-mind relationship of people undergoing the ordeal.⁷² Some early scholars found the 'paranormal' aspect of firewalking especially alluring, while others attempted 'scientific' observations. The history of scientific investigation of the firewalk is largely a history of skepticism, however. Some recorded the temperature of the bed of burning coals or hot rocks (Haggard 1902), determined how long the feet of the firewalkers were in contact with the fire, measured the flow of blood to their feet and

⁷¹ Hocken was a physician on board of the *Dunedin* out of New Zealand.

⁷² The earliest record of firewalking, according to Washburn-Hopkins (1910-27:30), was probably in the Indian text, *Tāndia Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāmaveda* (ca 800 B.C.). In this story, firewalking established the superior holiness of two Brahmin priests.

the thickness of their calluses. Samples of skin from the soles of firewalkers were taken from the Anastenarides of Langadas (Danforth, 1989: 208). In Beqa, Fulton (1903: 191) took samples of the stones used by firewalkers.⁷³ Some early observers tried walking on fire themselves.⁷⁴ A few burned their trousers (Langley 1901). Lady Thurston casually dropped her handkerchief in the fire to see if it would burn in Beqa in 1892 (Jackson 1894: 73; Lindt 1893: 52; Thomson 1894: 204).

I distinguish these early analyses from more recent attempts to explain the cognitive, psychological and physiological affects of firewalking in concrete, scientific terms (Table 2.4).⁷⁵

Cognitive and physiological analyses	Year
Barker	1998
Beane and Doty	1975
Benz	1969
Edsman	1987
Long	1936
Long	1954[1948]
Fulton	1903
Iannuzzo	1983
Henninger	1987
McCarthy & Leikind	1985
McCarthy & Leikind	1986
McDermott	1994
Morinis	1985
Obeyesekere	1978
Pearce	1977
Powell	1936

⁷³ Robert Fulton was a physician on a New Zealand ship. He had one of the stones from the *lovo* carried for miles in a palm-leaf basket back to the ship. He tried to cool it off in the sea, but the stone, still hot, fell out of the basket and he had to drop it overboard, conserving only a fragment, later analyzed by Professor Park of the Otago School of Mines (Simpson 1955: 238).

⁷⁴ Notably, Colonel Gudgeon, Governor of Rarotonga in Rarotonga (Gudgeon 1899: 58-60; Henry 1901: 54; Lang 1901: 454) and George Ely Hall, the Turkish Consul-General, with Commodore Germinot in Taha'a in 1900 (Henry 1901: 54; Lang 1901: 454).

⁷⁵ Some of the cognitive and physiological analyses are also useful in tracing transformation in the firewalking ceremony in Beqa throughout the 20th century (e.g., Fulton 1903; Powell 1936; Purves-Stewart 1935).

Price	1975
Purves-Stewart	1935
Sahadeo et al.	1974
Sansom	1998
Sabbatucci	1987
Simpson	1955
Sternfield	1992
Vilenskaya & Steffy	1991
Weil	1983
Xenakis	1977

Table 2.4

Firewalking is the most common of non-ordinary phenomena. Pearce argues,

Firewalking is such a common occurrence in so many countries simply because of the universal experience of fire itself. The idea is assimilated so easily because the points of similarity are so great that the few points of dissimilarity needing accommodation are not overwhelming. The act is impossible and incomprehensible to thinking as thinking, but not to thinking as action. (Pearce 1977: 157)

It is not my intent to propose an explanation for fire-immunity or what has enabled it to become such a widespread practice, but some analyses are more useful than others in understanding the psychology of the firewalker in Beqa and Oceania. A favorite hypothesis is that firewalkers enter a trance-like altered state that allows them to withstand the ordeal (Blake, 1985; Bouman, cited in Simpson 1955; Iannuzzo, 1983; Sansom, 1998; Xenakis, 1977).⁷⁶ Cognitive and emotional factors seem to be important in how people experience firewalking. Belief, *mana* and a fearless attitude tend to reduce the level of pain; fear seems to increase it.⁷⁷ After excluding McCarthy and Leikind's (1985, 1986) explanation of the physics of heat and materials, which does not involve any sort of belief or reference to brain chemistry, most of the others are about positive mental

⁷⁶ K.W. Bouman was a distinguished neurologist from Amsterdam who attended the firewalking ceremony in Beqa with Purves-Stewart and Waterson (1935). He concluded that mental preparation was fundamental to the performance (Simpson 1955: 240).

⁷⁷ It is one thing to control pain, another to prevent blistering or burning of the skin. I have addressed this question before a variety of academic and non-academic audiences (Pigliasco 2006a, 2006b; 2007b).

attitudes. Researchers such as Pearce (1977) and Weil (1983) argue that ‘belief’ is key. Certainly, firewalking in the past was done in a spiritual context. Even today in Fiji, when the former month-long taboo against having sex and eating coconut products before participating in firewalking has been reduced to a period of only few days or is completely disregarded, belief remains an important psychological factor.

Blake (1985) considers firewalking empowering and to involve the same process as innate healing. When the world economy was booming in the, firewalking caught the attention of corporate executives as a way to empower their employees. New Age and other alternative spiritual movements introduced it to their workshops on higher consciousness and personal growth. Danforth (1989) suggests that firewalking became a therapeutic ritual that empowered people by metaphorically moving participants from a culturally defined state of weakness to a culturally defined state of mental-physical healing. Danforth (1989), who studied the Anastenarides and walked twice, adopts the view that an acceptance of belief and mental strength are instrumental in the ability to firewalk. He further argues that a search of meaning and identity play important roles in the construction and maintenance of such rituals.

More recently, I asked Bulou Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga to comment on my choice not to enter any explanation on human body’s fire-immunity, focusing instead on the Sawau social body’s epistemology related to their cultural heritage.

If we were to delve into the physiological aspects of the *vilavilairevo*, I feel it would take away from the tribe the magic *mana* that every member of the tribe (including myself) feel the *vilavilairevo* gives each one of us i.e our faith and belief in our protection from ‘the children’ or *ko ira na gone* or *veli*. One can argue the way it is being publicised today in the hotels, is resulting in a slow erosion of the *mana* or magic. I feel that this process will ultimately expose *vilavilairevo* as a psychological process in the ‘mind over matter’ category. My own concern is for the well-being of

the [Sawau] tribe, and I feel that to seek out physiological reasons why they are not burned would certainly bring confusion into the whole ceremony. Such confusion may well result in people being burned. As there are at present no proven theories of the physiological reason for the tribe's ability to walk on fire, there is room for an array of different hypothetical interpretations any of which would negatively affect the tribe's association of the *vilavilairevo* with a sense of 'magic'. As outside observers we should be very cautious indeed of undermining a belief system, a *weltanschauung*, of a tribe. It is perhaps true that external observers as well as some members of the tribe, including myself, who have a broader view can entertain a range of alternate hypotheses, but such speculation is deleterious in its effect. (Tuimatanisiga pers. comm.)⁷⁸

An interest in the sensational and spectacular emerges in local newspaper and magazine articles (Table 2.5) and travel and tourist literature (Table 2.6). Both of these categories of narrative about firewalking are essential for understanding the dialogical construction of the modern spectacle from the point of view of the 'native' reporter as well as the tourist. The most significant and detailed early articles on *vilavilairevo* appeared in *Na Mata* (1885, 1897, 1897, 1911, 1914), *Na Tovata* (1969) and *Nai Lalakai* (1972).

⁷⁸ Email 24 May 2007.

Local news	Year
<i>Fiji Times</i> [FT]	1936
<i>FT</i>	1972
<i>FT</i>	1972
<i>FT</i>	1974
<i>Hawaiian Gazette</i> [HG]	1900
<i>HG</i>	1901
<i>HG</i>	1901
Hicks	2005
<i>Island Business</i> [IB]	1983
<i>Journal of Am. Folklore</i> [JAF]	1901
Keith-Reid	1974
Krauss	1993
Gotz	2001
Lave	1998
Movono	2005

Table 2.5

Movono	1998
<i>Nai Lalakai</i> [NL]	1972
<i>Na Mata</i> [Na Mata]	1885
<i>NM</i>	1897
<i>NM</i>	1897
<i>NM</i>	1911
<i>NM</i>	1914
<i>NT</i>	1969
Rigamoto	1973
Singh	1991
Smiles	1998
<i>Tahiti Philatelie</i> [TP]	2004
Tuqiri	2004
Toganivalu	1914
Vakarewakobau	2004
<i>Ville Papeete</i>	2004
<i>VP</i>	2005

Travel and tourist literature	Year
Ainsworth	1973
Barker	1968
Doherty	1982
Douglas	1989
<i>Fiji Visitors Buerau</i> [FVB]	1994[1967]
<i>FVB</i>	nd (1970s)
<i>FVB</i>	nd (1970s)
Kirk	2006
Lipton	1972
Marden	1958
<i>Pacific Island Monthly</i>	1982
McDermott	1978
Putigny	1993[1975]
Stanley	1999
Stanley	2004[1985]
Tedeschi	1973
Wright	1951
Wright	1981
Wright	1986
Wibberly	1964

Table 2.6

Spectacle is often synonymous with the ‘visual’, which obliges me to mention the role of images collected during my archival fieldwork. In the previous chapter I explained that part of my fieldwork entailed negotiating for access to material relevant to the *vilavilairevo* that is conserved at the Audio Visual Archive, established in 1985 in a joint venture between the Fiji Government and the Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany and currently overseen by the Ministry of Information, Communications and Media Relations. For the purpose of this study, I shall limit my filmography to broadcast documentaries or films (Table 2.7) and do not include local and foreign television specials and news. Vendetti’s *Fiji Firewalkers* (2003) will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 7 in the context of tourism, misrepresentations of firewalking and Naivilaqata’s ownership of the *vilavilairevo*. Geddes’ (1978) *The Island of the Red Prawns* authenticates Naivilaqata ownership of *vilavilairevo* and shows the use of the ceremony for private and non-touristic purposes. My collaboration with Francalanci on a documentary film on the 6th Festival of Pacific Arts held in Rarotonga turned out to be very useful.⁷⁹ During the opening speech, the Cook Islands’ Prime Minister, Sir Geoffrey Henry, called the firewalking ceremony an “untouched survivor of our [Pacific peoples] cultural heritage.” The ceremony was hosted by Tahitian *grand prêtre* Raymond Teriirooterai Arioi Graffe, who is also co-author with Leimbach of *Tahitian Firewalking*, filmed at the 5th Festival of Pacific Arts in Northern Queensland.

⁷⁹ The film was produced by the RTI-Mediaset Group.

Visual recordings	Year
Geddes	1978
Leimbach & Graffe	1988
Pigliasco & Francalanci	1992
Vendetti	2003

Table 2.7

The final three categories of archival materials concern anthropological research. A clichéd equation stands out in some of the anthropological literature: *vilavilavevo* equals tourism (Table 2. 8). Bossen (2000) and Hashimoto (1992) do not specifically mention the *vilavilavevo* ceremony, but discuss the construction of the tourist gaze in Fiji. All the other accounts place the *vilavilavevo* ceremony at the heart of their arguments on commodification and staged or emergent authenticity.

Anthropology of tourism	Year
Bossen	2000
Britton	1979
Burns	1993
Burns	1994
Burns	2003
Crick	1989
Hashimoto	1992
Henning-Brown	1984
Linnekin	1997
Oram	1997
Rajotte	1978a
Rajotte	1978b
Rajotte	1982
Smith	1989
Stanley	1998
Stymeist	1996
Thompson	1973

Table 2.8

If we exclude Smith (1979) Fankhauser (1987, 1993), Ehrlich's (2000), and Carson (2002) who look at the *Cordyline* plant earth ovens in Fiji and Polynesia focusing

on its archaeometric and ethnobotanical analysis (Table 2.9), only a couple of studies are truly ‘ethnographic’ attempts to reconstruct Sawau’s social organization and analyze the practice of *vilavilairevo* from angles other than tourism.

Only a few anthropological studies are truly ethnographic attempts to reconstruct Sawau’s social organization and analyze the practice of *vilavilairevo* from angles other than tourism. The first is the comprehensive survey of Beqa conducted in the late 1970s by John Bigay, et al. (1981). Their survey covered the island’s geography, geology, vegetation, prehistory, recorded history, demography, socio-political and economic organization, and land tenure; they dedicated eleven pages to the *vilavilairevo* ceremony. The second is Crosby’s informative article (1988a) and M.A. Thesis (1988b) focusing on Beqa’s archaeology, social structure and history. More recently, while I was still in Fiji, Newland (2004) published an article comparatively looking at Pentecostalism in two undisclosed locales in Fiji, one in the interior of Viti Levu and one in Beqa.

Archaeology and ethnobotany	Year
Carson	2002
Crosby	1988b
Ehrlich	1999
Ehrlich	2000
Fankhauser	1987
Fankhauser	1993
Smith	1979

Table 2.9

Cultural anthropology	Year
Bigay et al.	1981
Crosby	1988a
Newland	2004
Pigliasco	2007a

Table 2.10

Firewalking in Oceania

From an ethno-archaeological perspective, *umu tī* (earth ovens)⁸⁰ used to bake the starchy roots of the *Cordyline* plant are reported in various parts of Polynesia. Their origin in Polynesia is most likely in the Fiji-Samoa-Tonga region, in accordance to a phylogenetic model of Polynesian cultural traits originating in West Polynesia and subsequently expanding into East Polynesia (Carson 2002: 359; Kirch and Green 1987, 2001; Marck 1999). Fankhauser points out that the Maori constructed earth ovens and baked the *Cordyline* in the same manner as the rest of Polynesia, evidently bringing the technology with them (Fankhauser 1986: 21). Considering these circumstances, Carson believes that “a date range of c. 1250 to 1450 seems most appropriate as the earliest corroborated time period of *umu tī* in Samoa and New Zealand, without excluding the small possibility of an earlier date” (Carson 2002: 359).⁸¹

Archeological evidence shows that specialized *tī* oven technology became a primary characteristic of most Polynesian societies, closely correlated to an absence of heating-resistant ceramic vessels (Leach 1982, LeMoine 1987, Carson 2002: 360). Fankhauser observes that the *tī* plant, (*Cordyline fruticosa* or *terminalis*) introduced in Oceania by its early inhabitants, is undoubtedly of a very ancient origin and while its major use was for food, it also had medicinal and protective magico-religious uses throughout the Pacific islands.⁸² The pan-Polynesian distribution of the *Cordyline* earth ovens suggests that the *umu tī* was a cultural trait of Polynesian societies (Carson 2002:

⁸⁰ Proto Oceanic *qumun*, Proto Polynesian *qumu* (Kirch and Green 2001: 150).

⁸¹ The earliest possible date range reported for actual use of an earth oven in Polynesia is the period c.900 to 1250 in New Zealand (Fankhauser 1986: 81-2, cited in Carson 2002: 359).

⁸² Fankhauser (1987: 4, 8) lists the following references (only few are included in my bibliography): Fiji (Seeman 1865-73; Smith 1979), Tonga (Yunker 1959), Samoa (Setchell 1978), Niue (Sykes 1970), Cook Islands (Cheeseman 1903), Tahiti (Henry 1893, 1928), Marquesas (Brown 1931), Hawai‘i (Handy and Handy 1972); New Zealand (Walsh 1901, Cheeseman 1906).

363). As for the ritual associated to it, the *umu tī* ceremony of firewalking, besides Beqa's practice, discussed in the next section, several 'eye-witness' accounts show the presence of the rite of walking on the earth oven's hot stones in several Pacific islands:

- Ra'iātea-Huahine-Taha'a, and successively in Tahiti (*inter alia* Hastwell 1899[1885]; Henry 1893, 1928; Langley 1901; Huguenin 1902; Young 1925; Sasportas 1926; Handy 1927, 1930; Oliver 1974); by Tahitians in the Cook Islands (Gudgeon 1899; Large 1911); and by Tahitians in Oahu, Hawai'i (Gorten 1891; *HG* 1900; Davey 1901; *HG* 1901; *HG* 1901; *HG* 1901; *JAF* 1901; Kenn 1949).
- Aotearoa (Best 1902, 1924; Hammond 1924).
- Santo and Pentecost islands, Vanuatu (Regenvanu pers. comm.)
- Biak, West Papua (Rumiakek pers. comm.)

In addition, indirect accounts report firewalking (practiced by Hawaiians) in Hawai'i (Pukui 1972; Kenn 1949; Long 1948).

Carson (2002) observes that this distribution shows that the *umu tī* are more frequently reported in areas where the appropriate volcanic heating stones can be found in abundance, but are not or rarely reported in places where these materials are lacking or scarce. All ethnographic cases of *umu tī* indicate their large size, intense heat and prolonged heating time. These conditions may explain the apparently very rare occurrence of *tī* ovens technology and the complete absence of firewalking practices in Tonga, or in Samoa,⁸³ where ritual ceremonies have been lost indicating that cultural elaboration is unlikely to have occurred in frequent activities but rather only on rare occasions (Buck 1930: 136; Carson 2002: 364; see also Yunker 1959; Clark 1996).

⁸³ The *umu tī* cooking technique was popular in the Samoan western islands but not in the eastern ones (see Buck 1930: 136).

According to *grand prêtre (tahua)* Tu-nui Arii-peu, who in January 1949 accepted Charles Kenn's invitation to come Honolulu to perform a firewalking ceremony (*umu tī*) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa,

The rite of fire-walking did not form a part of the older Polynesian culture. It was introduced about a hundred years ago from Fiji, and spread to many of the South Sea Islands. It appeared in Huahine, the chief's island [Arii-peu], around 1850, and about the same time began to be reported from Taha's [Taha'a] and Ra'iātea, the Cook Islands, Fiji and New Zealand. (Kenn 1949: 25)⁸⁴

A confirmation of the origin of the *umu tī* ceremony in Huahine in the Society Islands, is offered by Young, who became interested in the *umu tī* in the late 1800s, and attended the ceremony three times. Replying to Teuira Henry's account appeared on the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* (1893: 104-7), he observes that "the ceremony of the *umu tī* (the oven or fire pit of the *tī* plant (*Dracaena terminalis*) is said to have been first practiced in the Eastern Pacific on the island of Huahine at the *marae* of Fare-ti which was dedicated to the demi-god Hiro, a voyager of ancient times" (Young 1925: 219).⁸⁵

Young makes a series of interesting comments about the ceremony *before* it "degenerated into an exhibition to tourists, and the ritual is garbled even to the extent of recital of verses from the Scriptures!" (1925: 219). Young accurately reports that in the 'ancient ritual' the fire-pit was

⁸⁴ Charles Kenn, first recipient of the 'Living Treasures of Hawai'i honor, was a scholar of Hawaiian, which he taught at the University of Hawai'i, at University of California at Los Angeles, and at Brigham Young University - Hawai'i.

⁸⁵ Hiro, 'Iro, Hilo (in Hawai'i) or Whiro te Tupua (in Aotearoa), was a famous voyager (and robber) who became deified becoming (in Tahiti) the god of thieves. He was born in Hawai'i but brought up in Tahiti, where he became one of the greatest navigators. Aboard of his famous canoe *Hohoio*, built by Hutu, Memeru and Mai'i-hae, in the 13th century he reached Rapanui, Ratonga, the Austral Islands and various islands lying in the east, southeast, south and southwest of the Society Islands. "Though he never reached New Zealand, his fame was carried to that far-off land by his descendants who emigrated from central Polynesia in the 14th century" (Buck 1959[1938]: 33, 98, 172, 180).

Generally circular from three to four fathoms (18ft. to 24ft.) in diameter and four to six feet in depth. The area of the heated stones would be from 14ft. to 16ft. in diameter. (Young 1925: 219)

Curiously, this shape, size and depth of earth oven does not correspond to images recorded in the early 1900s' of the ovens used for the *umu tī* ceremony which were rectilinear, quadrilateral or rectangular (e.g., Yardley reproduced in *HG* 1901;⁸⁶ Kenn 1949; Leimbach and Graffe 1988), but does describe those of the *vilavilairevo* in Beqa. The circular pit described by Young, possibly referring to the *umu tī* ceremony he saw on Ra'īātea on July 20, 1898, is confirmed by Huguenin's, who sketched it by hand on the same day (1902: 148),⁸⁷ by Hastwell, who saw it in Ra'īātea on September 20, 1885, and by Henry's brother-in-law's testimony and sketch by hand in 1890⁸⁸ (Henry 1893: 104-5; Henry 1928: 214-5).⁸⁹

While Handy flimsily classifies the ceremony as a purificatory rite intended to destroy evil influences (Handy 1927, 1939). Henry emphasizes the essential role of the *tī* root, which "is frequently two feet long, and varies from six to ten inches in diameter. It has something of the texture of the sugar-cane and its thick juice is very sweet and nourishing, but it requires to be well baked before eating" (Henry 1893: 105).⁹⁰ Young explains that "the object of the ceremony, as stated by one of the priests of the cult some

⁸⁶ Yardley's sketch by hand of Papa-ita *umu tī* ceremony at Kaumakapili in Honolulu, published on the *Hawaiian Gazette*, January 22, 1901 (n.a.).

⁸⁷ Paul Huguenin, a Swiss teacher, arrived in Tahiti in 1896 with his wife Élisabeth in the position of Director of the Écoles des îles Sous-le-Vent. Having mastered the Tahitian language and customs he was adopted from the Taumihau family of Ra'īātea and started studying legends, beliefs and chants. In October 1899 his bad health forced him to leave Ra'īātea and make return to Europe.

⁸⁸ Teuira Henry's brother-in-law Gustaf Brodien of Ra'īātea.

⁸⁹ The sketch was made by Mr. Barnfield of Honolulu based on the picture taken in 1890 in Uturoa, Ra'īātea, by Monsieur Morné, Lieutenant de Vaisseau (Henry 1893: 106).

⁹⁰ Of the thirteen varieties of the plant distinguished by the Maohi, *tī 'uti* was most favored for religious uses and was cultivated at the *marae* (Henry 1928: 37).

40 years ago, was to ensure that crops of food and fruit should be good (and to that end that plentiful rains should fall), also that the different species of migratory fishes should not fail to make their appearance at their usual seasons” (1925: 222). Kenn notes that,

Whatever foreign names may have been given to the ritual, it became known in short order as the ‘Ceremony of the *Ti* Root Oven’ (*Te umu ti*). The roots of the *ti*-plant were baked in ground ovens when other food was scarce. Because the cooking took too much time, many heated rocks had to be made ready to place in the pits....The rite had been used to provide or to give proof of ‘purity’ or ‘purification’ in the religious sense. It was supposed to bring clairvoyance and clairsaudience so that the fate of lost voyagers might be learned, lost articles recovered etc. It was a thanksgiving ceremony. It called down a blessing on crops and people and animals. It brought rain. It replenished the fish in waters nearby. (Kenn 1949: 26, 32).⁹¹

According to Kenn, in Polynesia the *umu ti* was an additional rite not intended to replace older rites already in use:

Once a set of ideas has been accepted [in Polynesia], it is fitted neatly in with other ideas already a part of the scheme of things, and soon takes on the aspect of having been part of the older system for centuries back. In this process of adopting the new beliefs and practices, slight changes are made. Words are changed, invocations made over into the more familiar tongue, and the names of the foreign gods replaced by the Polynesian counterparts. (Kenn 1949: 27)

This confirms Oliver’s assertion that although these ceremonies seem to have been “specifically Tahitian (or actually Raiatean) in cosmographic reference, this does not necessarily prove that the custom prevailed in the Society Islands in pre-European times. Firewalking is attested in other Polynesian archipelagos and might well have been introduced (or reintroduced) into the Society Islands from elsewhere during the nineteenth century” (1974: 94). Moreover, while the language used in the invocations by

⁹¹ Charles Kenn refers that Chief Tu-bui Arii-peu “gratefully, and in all humility” adopted him as his blood son, giving Kenn an honored place in his family line, and a new name ‘Arii-peu Tama-iti’ (Kenn 1949: 35-6)

Tupua in 1890 and 1898 (Henry 1893: 106-7; Young 1925: 216-7) is consistent with that used by Arii-peu in 1949 (Kenn 1949: 38-42), Young observes that none of the invocations to the gods he recorded at the *umu tī* ceremonies were used anywhere else in the Eastern Pacific.

Tu-nui Arii-peu told Kenn that in Huahine-Ra'iātea "firewalking was handed down to the eldest son, or lacking a son, to one consecrated as a blood son (*hoolaa*) for that purpose" (Kenn 1949: 28). Arii-peu was a descendant of the original firewalker in the Huahine, Mae-haa, who passed it to his son Ma-oa, and who in turn consecrated his son, Papa-ita, from whom he passed to Afaitaata, and then to Arii-peu. In his reconstruction Kenn observes that another *grand prêtre* (*tahua*), Arii-pao, also practiced firewalking in Ra'iātea. Supposedly, Tupua and Taero, two other *tahua* from Ra'iātea, came from the 'Raiatean' lineage, for Young reports that they were the last *tahua* of the *umu tī* (Young 1925: 215).⁹²

Steps and invocations used in the <i>umu tī</i> ceremony by <i>tahua</i> (<i>grand prêtre</i>) Tupua in 1890, 1898	Steps and invocations used in the <i>umu tī</i> ceremony by <i>tahua</i> (<i>grand prêtre</i>) Tu-nui Arii-peu in 1949	Translation
(Henry 1893; Young 1925; Taumihau ⁹³ in O'Brien 1921)	(Kenn 1949)	
<i>E tapea na te rima i te rau ti, a parau ai:</i> "E te Nu'u atua e! A		Hold the <i>tī</i> leaves in the hand and say: "O ye conclave of the gods!

⁹² The two *tahua* met Henry's brother-in-law Gustaf Brodien, a resident of Ra'iātea in 1890 (Henry 1893: 106) and Huguenin and Young on July 20, 1898. Huguenin informs us that "le sorcier Tupua, le plus célèbre des Iles de la Société" was also a healer (Huguenin 1902: 142).

⁹³ A Deacon of Ra'iātea (O'Brien 1921: 515).

⁹⁴ Henry observes that this is old Tahitian and many words are obsolete "*Tahutahu*, means sorcery and also to kindle a fire" (Henry 1893: 107).

<p><i>ara, a tia i nia! Te haere nei taua i te umu-tī ananahi.</i>”</p> <p><i>Mareva na, e atua ia; e mau na te avae i raro; e taata ia. A hio tia ra i te vai-ra’a o te umu ra, e a ofati i te rau ti, mai te na ô e: “E te Nu’u atua e! E haere oe i teie nei po, e ananahi ra, o tatou atoa i’a.”</i></p> <p><i>A rūrū ra i tea au ti ei tautoo tahutahu,⁹⁴ amoemoe i roto i te marae, mai te ota’ata’a i roto i te rau fau, e ia vai i reira hoe ae rui a na ô ai te</i></p>	<p>(According to Kenn this is the 2nd invocation, before breaking the <i>tī</i> plant) <i>E te Nu’u-atua! A ra, a tia i nia Te haere nei taua i te umu tī ananahi! E te Nu’u-atua e! E Te haere oe i teie nei po! E ananahi tatou atea ia!</i></p> <p>(According to Kenn, this is the 3rd invocation, while placing <i>tī</i> plant in <i>marae</i>, before leaving</p>	<p>Awake! Arise! Let us go to the <i>ti</i>-oven tomorrow!”</p> <p>If they float in the air, they are gods, but if their feet touch the ground they are human beings. Now, look towards the direction of the oven and break off the <i>tī</i> leaves and say: “‘Oh assembly of the gods! You shall go [to the <i>ti</i>-oven] tonight, and tomorrow we shall go together.”</p> <p>Then, wrap the the <i>tī</i> leaves up in leaves of hibiscus and put them to sleep in the <i>marae</i> where they must remain until morning, and while leaving say: “Arise! Awake assembly of</p>
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⁹⁵ Henry has “*roi*” (bed) (Henry 1893: 107).

⁹⁶ Kenn writes in a note “from Miss Teuira Henry’s article in J.P.S., vol. 12, p.105 [1893], checked by J.L. Young’s article in J.P.S., vol. 34, p. 214-222[1925]” (Kenn 1949: 41).

⁹⁷ Kenn translates like Henry translates: “Great-woman-who-sets-fire-to-the-skies” (Kenn 1949: 39).

⁹⁸ Henry translates: “Let the dark earth-worm, and the light earth-worm, go to the oven” (Henry 1893: 107). Young argues that “it is true that *to’e* is an earth-worm, but in this case it appears from careful research that *toe’e uri* means darkness or a darkening, and *to’e e tea* light or the beginning of light—the expression *to’e uri ma te to’e tea* has been variously translated by old natives to mean: ‘Night and day’; ‘Twilight and dawn’; ‘The waning and the waxing of the moon.’ The phrase was no doubt a sacerdotal one, and was intended to convey the idea of the states of light and darkness.” (Young 1925: 214). Kenn translates: “Let the cool darkness and the cool light go to the oven” (Kenn 1949: 40).

⁹⁹ Young translates “attendants of the fire pit” (Young 1925: 218).

¹⁰⁰ Henry translates: “Oh dark earth-worms! Oh light earth-worms!” (Henry 1893: 107).

¹⁰¹ Young argues that the word in the ancient ritual is *ra’i* (atmosphere) and not *roi* (or *ro’i*) (‘bed’).

¹⁰² Young argues that Henry’s translation “Great-woman-who-sets-fire-to-the-skies” (Henry 1893: 107) should be “‘who tends the fire’ or ‘who keeps a sacred fire burning’” (Young 1925: 214). Hence, Young prefers the expression: “High-Priestess-of-the-Heavens” (Young *ibid.*) Interestingly, Henry writes that “the Great-woman-who-sets-fire-to-the-skies was a high born woman in olden times, who made herself respected by the oppressive men, when they placed women under so many restrictions. She said to have had the lightening at her command, and struck men with it when they encroached upon her rights” (Henry *ibid.*) Huguenin, like Kenn paraphrases Henry in his translation: “grand femme qui met le feu dans les cieux” (Huguenin 1902: 146).

<p><i>poroi atu:</i> “‘A’e! A ara, e te nu’u atua e! To avae te haere i te umu tī. Te pape e te miti te haere atoa. Te to’e uri ma te to’e tea e haere i te umu. Te ura o te auahi, e te ruirui o te auahi, e haere anae; na oe e haere, e haere oe i teie nei po, e ananahi ra o oe ia e o vau, e haere taua i te umu tī.”</p> <p><i>Ia a’ahiata ra a ti’i a rave mai i te rau ti. A amo ai i te umu roa; a tatara i te ineinera’a o te feia a haere i nia i taua umu ra a fa’atia ai i mua a na ô ai: “‘E na ta’ata e tahutahu i te umu e! A tapohe na! E to’e uri! E to’e tea! Te pape! Te miti! Te a’ama o te umu! Te ru’i ru’i o te umu! A hi’i atu i te tapua avae o te feia e haere nei, a tahiri na i te ahu o te ra’i!”⁹⁵ E te feia toetoe na, e taoto anae tatou i roto i teie nei umu. A mau na, e te vahine-nui-tahu-rai’i, e i te tahiri. E haere na taua i te ropu o te umu!</i></p> <p><i>E ia ineine anae te ta’ata ra, o ai: Te hi’i tapuae tahi! Te hi’i tapuae rua! Te hi’i tapuae toru! Te hi’i tapuae ha! Te hi’i tapuae rima! Te hi’i tapuae ono! Te hi’i tapuae hitu! Te hi’i tapuae varu!</i></p>	<p>the tī plant area) <i>Ae! E ara, e te Nu’u atua e! To avae te haere i te umu-tī. Te pape e te miti, e haere atea. Te to’e, ma te to’e tea, e haere i te Umu. Te ura o te auahi, e haere ana’e; na oe e haere, e haere oe i teia nei po, e ananahi ra o oe ia e o vau; e haere taua i te umu-tī.</i></p> <p>(According to Kenn this is the 4th invocation, before fire-walking)⁹⁶ <i>E na ta’ata e tahutahu i te umu e! E tapohe na! E to’e uri! E to’e tea! Te pape! Te miti! Te a’ama o te umu! Te ruirui o te umu! A hi’i atu i te tapue avae o te feia e haere nei, a tahiri na i te ahu o te ra’i! E te feia to’eto’e na, e taoto anae tatou i roto i teie nei umu.</i></p> <p>(According to Kenn this is the 1st invocation, upon approaching the tī plant) <i>Te hi’i tapua’e tahi! Te hi’i tapua’e rua! Te hi’i tapua’e toru! Te hi’i tapua’e ha! Te hi’i tapua’e rima!</i></p>	<p>gods! Let your feet take you to the ti-oven. The waters of the rivers and the waters of the ocean shall go together; the darkness and the light shall go to the fire pit;⁹⁸ let the redness and the shades of the fire all go. You shall go, tonight you shall go and tomorrow you and I shall go the ti-oven.”</p> <p>Then, the at early dawn take and bring there the tī leaves tied up into a wand carrying them on the shoulder straight to the oven, unwrap them when everybody is ready to pass through the fire pit, hold them forward and say: “Oh men (spirits)⁹⁹ who heated the oven! Extinguish the flames! Oh night! Oh day!¹⁰⁰ Fresh water and salt water, heat of the oven and redness of the oven, hold up the footsteps of the walkers, fan away the heat of the bed!¹⁰¹ Oh cold beings, let us lie down together in the midst of the oven. Oh Great woman who keeps a sacred fire burning hold the fan and let us go into the oven for a little while!”¹⁰²</p> <p>Then, when everybody is ready to walk in we say: “Holder of the first footstep! Holder of the second footstep! Holder of the third footstep! Holder of the fourth footstep! Holder of the fifth footstep! Holder of the sixth footstep! Holder of the seventh footstep! Holder of the eighth footstep!</p>
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<p><i>Te hi'i tapuae iva!</i> <i>Te hi'i tapuae tini!</i> <i>E te vahine-nui-tahu-</i> <i>rai'i! E! Pô'ia!</i></p> <p><i>Haere noa'tura ia te</i> <i>ta'ata mai te ino ore</i> <i>na ropu, a n ate hiti o</i> <i>taua umu-tī ra.</i></p>	<p><i>Te hi'i tapua'e ono!</i> <i>Te hi'i tapua'e hitu!</i> <i>Te hi'i tapua'e varu!</i> <i>Te hi'i tapua'e iva!</i> <i>Te hi'i tapua'e tini!</i> <i>E te vahine-nui-tahu-</i> <i>rai'i e!⁹⁷ Pô'ia!</i></p>	<p>Holder of the ninth footstep! Holder of the tenth footstep! Oh Oh Great woman who keeps a sacred fire burning! All is covered!"</p> <p>Then, everybody takes a walk through the oven without hurt, into the middle and around the oven, following the leader (<i>taua</i> or <i>tahua</i>) with the wand beating from side to side.</p>
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Table 2.11

There is a historical gap between the *umu tī* practice of the 1950s, which was granted by descendance rights, and the 'disfranchised' *umu tī* revival of the 1970s. This has made it impossible to learn more about Arii-peu and his predecessors. Raymond Teriirooterai Arioi Graffe, a *tahua* who performed the *umu tī* ceremony at the Festival of Pacific Arts in Northern Queensland in 1988 and in Rarotonga in 1992, helped bring about a revival of *umu tī* in his quest for cultural identity that started in the 1970s in Tahiti.¹⁰³ Since the 1980s, the *umu tī* ceremony is occasionally performed in Tahiti exclusively by Graffe and his family, including his assistant and adopted son Ugo 'Tierry' Magnani, who is not related by descent to the Huahine-Raiatean lineage of *tahua*.¹⁰⁴ However, through Ben Finney's reminiscence of a firewalking ceremony held

¹⁰³ I met Graffe in Rarotonga in October 1992 and in Hitiaa (Tahiti) in August 2002. Born in Punaauia (Tahiti) in 1948, he worked as a primary school teacher in Papeete for seven years, then traveled to France to study archaeology at the Institute of Art and Archaeology of the University of Paris. He now works with the Department of Archaeology of the Centre Polynésien des Sciences Humaines (CPSH) of the Musée de Tahiti et des Îles. In the 1980s, he became interested in the *umu tī* ceremony and traditional tattooing and mastered knowledge of the Tahitian pantheon of gods and goddesses and design patterns. He gradually put his ancestral tattoos on his own body. Others who followed a similar quest for cultural identity include Coco Hotahota in the dancing arts, John Mairai in theatrical arts, Henri Hiro in reconstructing traditional ceremonies on the *marae*, Clément Pito in the art of traditional navigation, Duro Raapoto and others (cf., Graffe, quoted by Gotz 2001: 21).

¹⁰⁴ Interview August 9 2002, h. 17:00, Hitiaa, Tahiti.

on the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa grounds at the time when Emory was directing the Bishop Museum (i.e., the one described by Kenn of 1949), helped me establish an invaluable ethnographic link with Tereretia Terooatea, a descendent of Raiatean firewalkers.

In 1964, Maui native Tom Cummings, married Raiatean native Tereretia Terooatea and followed her to Ra‘iātea for five years.¹⁰⁵ In Ra‘iātea, Cummings became responsible for narrating the *umu tī* ceremony to the guests of the Bali Hai Hotel. His wife Teretia learned from her father, Tani Terooatea, a Raiatean historian (*orero*) trained by her grandfather, historian and pastor, Tunui Orometua, that firewalking originally came from Fiji, but he did not say exactly when or by whom the ceremony was introduced in Huahine-Ra‘iātea. A member of her family, Tiaiho, a *tahua* and healer, performed firewalking in the 1950s in Ra‘iātea. Teretia confirmed Kenn’s thoughts, saying that in Huahine-Ra‘iātea the firewalking ceremony was associated with *mana* and purification and that it was a seasonal celebration held during the harvest. She believes that the ceremony, in respect to the Tahitian deities, included chants referring to the elements of earth, water and fire. Teretia remembers that during her childhood Ra‘iātea was covered in green *tī* plants, whose starchy rhizomes were large and sweet as honey. She confessed that her family never used sugar until she was twenty years old.¹⁰⁶

Tom Cummings remembers visiting the island of Taha’a (adjacent to Ra‘iātea) where he saw the remains of a 30ft. *tī* oven used to cook the *Cordyline*. Oliver believes that such ovens were the sites of *umu tī* ceremonies “partly perhaps because of their

¹⁰⁵ Tom Cummings is an educational specialist at the Bishop Museum. He comes from the *hula* storytelling tradition of his mother’s sister, *kumu hula* Aunty Mae Loebenstein. His mother is Kahili Long Cummings.

¹⁰⁶ Interview August 19 2004 h. 17:00, Laie, Oahu.

suitably large diameters but also because of the direct availability of the ritually necessary *tī* leaves” (1974: 247). Carson observes that the main technique for increasing heat in a earth oven is to increase its size, allowing more space for fuel: the larger size accommodates a greater volume of stones that continue to radiate heat and accommodate a greater quantity of *tī* rhizomes (2002: 349). Teretia explained to me that these large *tī* ovens were employed to prepare and store large numbers of baked rhizomes which she remembers were cooked together with the large roots of a wild taro called ‘*ape*, which would keep the *Cordyline*’s rhizomes moist and tender.¹⁰⁷ Henry provides a description of cooking in the Raiatean *tī* oven:

The *tī*-roots are...thrown in whole, accompanied by short pieces of ‘*ape*-root (*Arum costatum*) that are not quite so thick as the *tī*, but grow to the length of six feet and more. The oven is then covered over with large leaves and soil, and left so for about three days, when the *tī* and ‘*ape* are taken out well cooked, and of a rich, light brown colour. The ‘*ape* prevents the *tī* from getting too dry in the oven. (Henry 1893: 105-6; see also Oliver 1974: 247, 250)

Similarly to Kane’s (1993) and Finney’s (2003, 1999) observations in relation to the ‘transferring’ of the ‘*awa* ceremony from Tonga to Hawai‘i, The *umu tī* ceremony probably resulted from the frequent cultural exchanges among all Polynesians, where “much enjoyment is derived from exploring the astonishing similarities within the basics of their respective language, custom and tradition. From such similarities, bridges of communication and bonds of friendship are being created; out of these will grow cultural traditions that will be understood by all Polynesians” (Kane 1993 quoted in Finney 2003: 72; 1999: 26). The fact that the *umu tī* ceremony (according to Tu-nui Arii-peu and

¹⁰⁷ Wild taro (*Arum costatum*) roots, “when baked are palatable, farinaceous, and nutritive, resembling the Irish potato more than any other root in the islands” (Ellis 1829: I, 357-8).

Tereretia Terooatea Cummings) did not arrive in Huahine-Ra'iātea until the mid-nineteenth century finds further confirmation in Oliver's treatise on ancient Tahitian society. Oliver points out that "if the early Europeans visitors had seen or heard about such prodigies they would assuredly have mentioned them" (1974: 94). This would also explain the silence of Captain Cook's journals on the *umu tī* ceremony.¹⁰⁸ Cook was often entertained with *heiva* dances and other feasts, but his and his crew's journals do not mention the *umu tī* practice. It is possible that his ships always arrived in the wrong season, but it is more likely that the ritual was not part of Huahine-Raiatean culture. None of the Raiateans who became friendly with Captain Cook appear ever to have discussed or described it to him. It was evidently never mentioned by Tupaia (or Tupia) of Ra'iātea, an aristocrat, *tahua*, ritual specialist and skillful navigator, who was a guest on board the *Dolphin* in 1767 and interpreter on the *Endeavour*.¹⁰⁹ Hitihiti (a.k.a. Mahine), a high-ranking young chief linked to the Puni chiefly line of Bora Bora, traveled on the *Resolution* to Tonga, New Zealand, Rapa Nui and Marquesas from 1773 to 1774 with Captain Cook; he also does not seem to have discussed the firewalking ceremony.¹¹⁰ Mai,

¹⁰⁸ Ra'iātea was Captain Cook's favorite island. He visited Ra'iātea and Huahine three times: during the first voyage on July 20-24, 1769; during the second voyage on September 2-7, 8-17, 1773, May 15 - June 4, 1774; and during the third voyage on October 12 - November 7, 1777 (Cook 1999[1955-74] Beaglehole ed.). Cook was not a stranger there. Huahine Chief Orio adopted Cook's name (Toote) and Cook became a British Orio. On September 9, 1773, Orio went to Haamanino harbour to welcome Captain Cook in 1769. They met once more in October 1777 and in November Orio, with some of his men, accompanied Cook to Borabora to recover an anchor the Bougainville had lost there (Thomas 2003). Thomas informs us that "at both these islands the navigator appears emotionally transported by encounters with prominent men whom he has met before, men who are on their part affected, at any rate pleased, to see him again. He writes as lyrically as he ever does about their civility and generosity" (Thomas 2003: 200).

¹⁰⁹ The *Dolphin*, commanded by Captain Samuel Wallis, spent five weeks in Tahiti from June to July 1767. The *Endeavour* was commanded by Captain Cook on the first voyage. Tupaia died of scorbatus with his servant Tayeto (Taiata) in Batavia in December 1770.

¹¹⁰ The *Resolution* was commanded by Captain James Cook on his second voyage. Captain William Bligh dined with Hitihiti in 1788 during the *Bounty* expedition and, on returning in 1792, heard that Hitihiti had gone with Captain Edwards of the *Pandora* in search of the *Bounty*

or Omai as he came to be known to the British, a native of Ra'iātea who lived in Huahine, joined the *Adventure* in September 1773, becoming the first Polynesian representative to Europe.¹¹¹ During the four years he traveled around the world and lived in England, he also does not seem to have mentioned the earth oven ceremony.

Both Banks and his assistant Parkinson mention the nutritional properties of the 'ape and tī, but do not discuss the way the roots were cooked or baked in the *umu tī* (Parkinson 1999[1773]: 38, 43; see also Forster 1786a: 62 in Nicolson and Fosberg 2004: 16).¹¹² Anecdotal evidence says that Banks and Omai often “competed” in the “cooking of difficult outdoor dishes,” but “nothing could be better dress'd, or more savoury [than Omai's dishes], the smouldering pebble-stones and embers of the Otaheitan [Tahitian] oven had given a certain flavour to the fowls, a *soupcon* of smokiness, which made them taste as if a ham accompanied them” (Alexander 1977: 126).¹¹³ Banks also describes worship spaces (*marae*) he visited and *tahua*, which he says means ‘man of knowledge’.

mutineers.

¹¹¹ The *Adventure* was commanded by Captain Tobias Furneaux, who was more “desiderous” to have Omai on board than was Cook (Thomas 2003: 199). Omai traveled around the world and then lived in England from July 1774 to June 1776. On November 2, 1777, under King George III orders, he was repatriated to Huahine, where Cook purchased him a piece of land and the ships' carpenters built him a house (Home nd: 19-27, 30-41). Alexander Home (c.1738-1823) joined the crew of HMS *Discovery* on 16 March 1776. Of Home we have a Folio manuscript, 18 leaves, no covers, comprising *inter alia*: ‘The Account of Otihiti and Our Transaction there, Continued’ [pp 19-27, 30-41]. Manuscript account of the visit of HMS *Resolution*, commanded by Capt. James Cook, and HMS *Discovery*, commanded by Capt. Charles Clerke, to Tahiti, Sept. – Dec. 1777. It includes notes on Omai's character, the house built for him, and relations with the chiefs Tu and Mahine. Home's son, George Home wrote the *Memoirs of an Aristocrat and Reminiscences of the Emperor Napoleon* (1837), which contains references to his father's voyages.

¹¹² Joseph Banks, naturalist and botanist, took part in Cook's first voyage (1768–1771). Sydney Parkinson, a great botanical artist, was discovered and employed by Joseph Banks to travel with him on James Cook's first voyage to the Pacific in 1768 and died at sea from malaria in 1771. Georg Forster and his father (Johann Reinhold Forster) were naturalists who accompanied James Cook on his second voyage to the Pacific (1772-1775).

¹¹³ Banks had met Omai during Cook's first trip. During the two years Omai spent in England, Banks had become his mentor.

The *tahua*, according to Banks, were retainers of knowledge of about the divinities, astronomy and navigation (Banks 1963[1896]: 381-3). However, he never mentions the *umu tī* ceremony.

In the Cook Islands, Gudgeon and Large state that firewalking ceremonies in Rarotonga and Atiu in the late nineteenth century were organized by Raiatean men. Gudgeon describes a “young man of the Ra’iātea family who are hereditary firewalkers” (1899: 60). Large, who saw the ceremony on the island of Atiu, writes that “the proceedings were conducted by a native named Pauro Moari, a *taunga* (priest or skilled man) from Ra’iatea” (1911: 1). Likewise, the ceremonies brought to Honolulu between December 1900 and January 1901 were hosted by a Raiatean, Papa-ita, Arii-peu’s ‘grandfather’.

In Hawai‘i, firewalking seems to have been imported from Tahiti and incorporated into the local cosmogony. In *Nānā i ke Kumu* (Look at the Source), Mary Kawena Pukui discusses the importance of the Tahitian *tī* plant in firewalking:

No one was able to walk on lava beds cooled just enough to bear one’s weight without carrying *tī* leaves. My great-great-grandmother used to walk across hot lava this way and never get burned. Our family line is from the Pele priesthood and Pele is the volcano goddess. So the *tī* leaves invoke Pele’s protection. (Pukui 1972: 191; see also Long 1954[1948]: 29)¹¹⁴

Pukui recalls that in her lava-strewn homeland, the Big Island of Hawai‘i, sandals made of dried *tī* leaves were used to cross partly cooled lava beds (Handy and Handy 1972: 225). According to Pukui, “If a menstruating woman was obliged to cross the volcano

¹¹⁴ Mary Abigail Kawena-‘ula-o-ka-lani- a-hi‘iaka-i-ka-poli-o-pele-ka-wahine-‘ai-honua Wiggin Puku‘i, teacher, historian, author, translator, *kumu hula*, and composer, worked for many years at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, and, along with Samuel Elbert, co-authored the *Hawaiian Dictionary* (1957).

goddess' domain, in order to avoid Pele's wrath she wore anklets and bracelets and a *lei* of *tī* leaves and was accompanied on either side by a man holding up a stalk of *tī* plant like a flag of truce" (Handy and Handy 1972: 222).

Pukui also points out that the *menehune* cooked *tī* roots in earth ovens in the area of Kaimuki (Pukui, Elbert, et al. 1989[1975]: 28).¹¹⁵ Buck argues that at the time of the arrival of the *menehune*, the only foods available in Hawai'i were "the fruit of pandanus, the pith of the tree fern, the root of the *Cordyline* (*tī*), and the berries of the *ohelo* and *akala*" (Buck, 1959[1938]: 258). Carson suggests that in Hawai'i, *tī* ovens were made only on rare occasions, dictated by famine (Carson 2002: 345-6; see Fankhauser 1987: 9; Malo 1898: 43). According to Buck:

Formerly, the underground stem was cooked in the earth oven, then chewed like sugar cane. In times of famine, large ovens of *tī* root were prepared by the community and the Honolulu suburb of Kaimuki (*ka imu ki*) is said to have obtained its name from such an oven (*imu*). (Buck 1957: 11)¹¹⁶

Similarly Handy and Handy point out that:

In old Hawaii the [*tī*] root steamed in the *imu* was a favorite sweet, chewed like sugar cane... In famine times *tī* roots were gathered from the forest in large quantities and steamed in great ovens, then grated, mashed, mixed with water, and drunk. It is said that there was a famous oven of

¹¹⁵ *Menehune* are a "legendary race of small people, who worked at night, building fish ponds, roads, temples" (Pukui and Elbert 1986[1957]: 246). The *menehune* were associated with the legend of Hawai'i-loa, who sailed along the Micronesian route before reaching Polynesia. Erroneously described as gnomes and fairies, Buck considers them to have been real, living people of Polynesian stock who should be honoured for being the first to cross the ocean to Hawai'i (Buck, 1959[1938]: 61, 259). In Tahiti, a similar term was used for the third class into which people were divided: the laborers, the commoners and the *manahune*. Fornander argues that Hawaiians adopted the term to refer to a legendary race of skillful, cunning dwarves (Fornander, 1973[1878-1885]: 55).

¹¹⁶ The earliest historic references regarding the cooking of *tī* roots describe the production of fermented liquor, *ōkolehao* (alcohol), which was also brewed in Tahiti (Ellis 1853: 130-1, 1963: 184; Handy and Handy 1972: 224; Portlock 1789: 91;). This may be similar to the fermented drink brewed by Tahitians for Chief Cokanauto in Beqa.

this sort east of Honolulu at Kaimuki (*Ka-imu-ki*, “The-ti-oven”). At Ke`anae, Maui, there was likewise a great *imu ki*. (Handy and Handy 1972: 224)

The place name Ka-imu-ki, meaning “the-ti-oven” refers to a time of drought when the a great ground oven was made for steaming roots of the *tī* (*kī*) plant, which was one of the emergency foods gathered in the uplands there. (Handy and Handy 1972: 275)

Firewalking was also probably brought to Aotearoa by Polynesian voyagers (Fornander, 1973[1878-1885]; Percy-Smith 1921[1898]).¹¹⁷ The presence of the ceremony by the early 20th century was confirmed by Best (1924) and Hammond (1924).¹¹⁸ Best was not aware of any special name assigned to the *umu* used for the firewalking ceremony in Aotearoa (Best 1924: 205). However, he observes that “a native tradition has it that the name of Paraparaumu (a place near Pae-kakariki) is connected with a performance of fire-walking at that place” (ibid.). Best collected twenty-eight special names for the *ahi tapu* (sacred fires) and twenty-one names for special *umu tupu* (sacred ovens) in which food was cooked for ceremonial feasts. Among disparate uses including divination, making war charms, hunting, fishing, canoe building, protecting the crops, tattooing, black magic, exhumation, and averting evil omens, the *ahi amoamohanga* ceremony was a specific rite connected with offerings of first fruits (*amoamohanga*) to the gods to remove harmful influences.

¹¹⁷ Several legends, chants and oral accounts, mainly Maori, talking about frequent voyages from and to Fiji (also Iti or Whiti). A number of tales cluster about a hero-deity named Tawhaki (also Taaki, Kahai), an intrepid navigator of the ‘heroic period’ (700 A.D.) who reached Fiji and ascended a mountain called Whiti-haua. Percy-Smith believes that three fierce semi-monsters named Whiti, Matuku and Peka, described in the legend, correspond to the island: Viti (Levu), Matuku (Lau) and Peka (Beqa). See also later voyaging accounts in 1250 A.D. describing Tangiia who reached Rapa Nui from Fiji; Iro (Whiro, Hiro, Hilo); Turi from Ra’iātea who sailed his canoe *Aotea* canoe from Tahiti to Aotearoa, and so on (Fornander 1973[1878-85]; Percy-Smith 1921[1898]).

¹¹⁸ And indirectly by Lang 1901; Langley 1901; Washburn-Hopkins 1910-27; Young 1925; Henry 1928; Fankhauser 1987, 1993; and Carson 2002.

Best (1902) also described a rite performed by Te Hahae of the Ngati-awa tribe. Himiona Tikitu of Te Toko told Best about a sorcerer, Te Hahae, who avenged the death at sea of his grandson, Te Rangi-kaku. Te Rangi-kaku's canoe had been swamped during a solo fishing expedition. When his body drifted ashore, it was found by the Tauranga people, who ate it. Te Hahae ordered "that taro be cultivated, that eels be caught (and cured)." The Tauranga people arrived to get the taro and eels. Then Te Hahae announced that he would bless the *umu tapu* (sacred oven). When the stones were red hot, Te Hahae entered the pit and stood upon the red hot stones. Then he stepped out and proceeded to put the taro in the oven, which he covered with green branches and fern-fronds and then with earth, repeating the charm. When the food was cooked he uncovered the pit, placed the taro in the baskets, placed them in a row and presented the food to the Tauranga people. When they asked what they should give him in return, he said "we will go to the fishing-grounds." After they paddled out in the ocean, Te Hahae brought the winds (*uru-karaerae*) into furious violence. The sea was torn up and the storm washed away the Tauranga fishing-fleet, avenging his grandson (Best 1902: 93-4). Although Te Hahae used the *umu tapu* to stage his revenge, the story implies that there was calendrical ceremonial cooking of the crops.

Hammond remembers that when Fijians came to the New Zealand International Exhibition in Christchurch in November 1905 to perform their firewalking ceremony, the Maori people he conversed with in different parts of New Zealand "all agreed that at one time there were men among them who knew the secret, but it is now forgotten" (1924: 61). He continues:

At Temuka, South Island, during a visit paid to the Maoris, I was surprised to find the correct name was not Temuka, but Te Umukaha (a fierce oven).

On making inquiries I found the name had relation to the cooking of the roots of the cabbage tree [*Cordyline australis*] ¹¹⁹ and the ceremony of fire-walking... The Patea and Waitotara Maoris assured me that the ceremony of fire-walking was at one time quite common among their ancestors, and that they had a very clear traditional knowledge of that peculiar function” (Hammond 1924: 61) ¹²⁰

The account collected by Best and multiple functions of *umu*-related rituals among the Maori tribes of Aotearoa suggest that a single ritual may be performed for a variety of reasons or belong to several classifications. This might explain the presence of similar rituals among the Apma-speaking area of central and Pentecost island in Vanuatu, where fire-walking ceremonies were part of a type of initiation for young men. ¹²¹ The “fire-leaping ceremonies” in northern Pentecost and Maewo islands, however, may “have something to do with celebrating the new yams” (Regenvanu pers. comm.). ¹²² In Biak, West Papua, the Manwor clan has been using firewalking to attract tourists. Rumakiek, a West Papuan political refugee from the Arwam tribe who moved to Suva in 1970, told me that the first time he saw the Beqan *vilavilarevo* in Fiji the hairs on his arms stood up because of its striking resemblance to a ceremony originally performed by his people. Originally the *wor-barapen* ceremony was performed on important events and after a ceremonial procession of initiation. The young men (*kaborinsos*) who had just

¹¹⁹ Amino acid analysis of oven residues shows that Maori used large *umu tī* to bake the cabbage tree, *Tī kāuka* (*Cordyline australis*) (Fankhauser 1993: 19).

¹²⁰ Best and Hammond both mention the Ngati-Kahungunu tribe of Te Wairoa, the Ngati-Awa tribe of Te Teko and the Tuhoe tribe as custodians of traditional knowledge (Best 1924; Hammond 1924).

¹²¹ A tourist website (http://www.pocruises.com.au/html/vli_e.cfm?port=VILAandcruiseID=P517) advertises firewalking at Sunma Village, on Efate Island, Vanuatu. However, a couple of graduate students from New Zealand who traveled through Vanuatu that I interviewed at the Naviti Resort in Fiji discredited it as a spurious ceremony (May 4 2005 h. 19:30). Regenvanu also warned me about that performance (email April 9 2006). For the purpose of this study, I exclude the North Baining, New Britain fire-dance (*atut*) involving masked dancers running through a bonfire kicking branches or embers (Clark 1976; Fajans 1997).

¹²² Ralph Regenvanu is the Director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (email April 9 & 10, 2006).

been initiated were supposed to follow their spiritual leader walking over the earth oven's (*barapen*) hot stones¹²³

Firewalking in Beqa

After Tupaia showed Captain James Cook that systematic intentional voyaging in the Pacific was a matter of knowledge of astronomy, tides, weather and so on, and after Omai discovered some Tahitians in the Cook Islands in 1777, Cook immediately wrote in his journal that these incidents “explain better than the thousands conjectures of speculative reasoners, how the detached parts of the earth, and, in particular, how the South Seas, may have been peopled” (Cook & King 1785a: 200-2, quoted in Irwin 1996[1992]: 14). Percy-Smith and Fornander inform us that around 650 A.D., voyages of discovery originating from Fiji had begun. Fiji at that time represented the headquarters of Polynesian society; its colonies in Tonga and Samoa were rendezvous points on the way from remote Oceania to East Polynesia (Percy-Smith 1921[1898]: 171; Fornander 1973[1878-1885]: II, 2). Irwin argues that by the end of the eighteenth century, many Pacific islanders around Oceania were related to one another and shared common origins in the west, not the east (Irwin 1996[1992]: 15). By the early nineteenth century, Tahitian and Fijian crews were being exchanged on commercial brigs traveling between Melanesia and Polynesia.¹²⁴ For example, in 1834, the Tahitian crew from the *Charles Dogget* was working in Kadavu, Fiji, and in 1836 Tahitian teachers were stationed on

¹²³ Interview July 9 2005 h. 13:00, Suva.

¹²⁴ By the 1840s, missionary ships were sailing the same waters. In 1847, Mary Wallis reports that Cakobau was concerned about France's intention to send more missionaries to Fiji from Tahiti (1847) (Wallis 1983[1851]: 255).

Oneata, also in Fiji (Cargill, 1977 [1832-43]: 37; Derrick 2001[1946]: 69, 72).¹²⁵ In the 1840s, the *Havannah*'s captain and Reverend Jaggard noted that Cokanauto (known as Mr. Phillips), a Rewa chief who had been on Captain Eagleston's brig *Peru* and was later taken to Tahiti, spoke fluent Tahitian (Derrick 2001[1946]: 96; Erskine 1853: 461; Henderson, 1931).¹²⁶ At that time, Beqa was under Rewa's chiefdom.¹²⁷

Cokanauto, described by Derrick as "dissolute and besotted" was supplied of a grog "distilled at Beqa by his own Tahitians, made from bananas, sugar-cane, and the root of the wild dracaena [*Cordyline*] (*ti*)," of which he and his circle consumed three or four gallons a day (Derrick 2001[1946]: 105; Diapea 1928;¹²⁸ Erskine 1853).¹²⁹ This description reveals that the sweet rhizomes of *Cordyline*, which were indispensable to preparing a mulled alcoholic beverage for chief Cokanauto, grew copiously on Beqa.

Thomson begins his account of a *vilavilairevo* ceremony held in Beqa in September 1892

¹²⁵ In September 1830, Captain William Driver took the brig *Charles Doggett* to Tahiti, where he brought on board sixty-five exiled survivors of the *Bounty* and repatriated them to Pitcairn Island (Paine 1924: 375-6).

¹²⁶ On the same day (June 8, 1831) 'Mr. Phillips' joined the *Peru*, Captain Benjamin Vanderford, formerly on the *Clay*, Captain Brown, formerly on the *Niagara*, and four men of the *Glide*, all vessels from Salem, wrecked in Fiji on the way to China with their cargo of bêche-de-mer. They were picked up by Captain John H. Eagleston (Paine 1912: 398; see also Eagleston, John H. 1831. *Journal of Barque 'Peru'*. PMB Microfilm 205, Salem MA: Peabody Museum). Both Eagleston and Vanderford were employed as pilots and interpreters for Commodore Charles Wilkes' famous expedition of through the Pacific. Vanderford died on March 22, 1842, three months before reaching Fiji.

¹²⁷ Tahitians are remembered on Beqa to have lived at Nawaisomo. That Nawaisomo is today considered closely related to Rewa (*vasu ni Rewa*) leads me to assume that Nawaisomo in the 1840s was still under Rewa's dominion (Crosby 1988b: 140).

¹²⁸ William Diapea, also known as 'Diaper', John Jackson, and 'Cannibal Jack', was apparently kidnapped while on a whaling voyage by a group of Samoans. He spent four months with them and a further seven years in Fiji (1840-1847). Part of his narrative was published as an appendix to Captain John Erskine's *Journal* (1853). Another part of his story, based on a manuscript in the possession of the Reverend James Hadfield, was published in 1928 under the title *Cannibal Jack: The True Autobiography of a White Man in the South Seas*. The complete manuscript in nineteen copybooks spoken of by Diapea have never been recovered.

¹²⁹ In 1851, at forty years old, Cokanauto died of dysentery aggravated by his alcohol consumption (Derrick 2001[1946]: 105).

by focusing on this plant:

Once every year, the *masawe*, a dracaena [*Cordyline*] that grows in profusion on the grassy hillside of the island, becomes fit to yield the sugar of which its fibrous root is full. To render it fit to eat the roots must be baked among hot stones for four days. A great pit is dug, and filled with large stones and blazing logs, and when these have burned down and the stones are at white heat, the oven is ready for the *masawe*. (1894: 195)

From Thomson's account, I also deduce that the ritual performed by the Naivilaqata of the Sawau tribe in the 1890s had not yet become commodified and transformed into an exotic spectacle. Thomson observes that while the *kalou rere* was one of those offences punished under the British law with flagellation, "in one corner of Fiji [Beqa] a curious observance of mythological origin has escaped the general destruction" (Thomson, 1968[1908]: 171). This is confirmed by earlier accounts by Reverend Waterhouse (1997[1866]: 284-5) and Brewster (1967[1922]: 258), both pointing out that firewalking was exclusively the hereditary privilege of the Naivilaqata. During the forty years Brewster spent in Fiji, he never saw the "wonderful performance of the fire-walkers of the Island of Mbenga [sic], who in their ceremony of the *vilavilairevo* walk unharmed across the red-hot stones of a huge native oven," but did meet men from the Sawau tribe who described it to him (Brewster 1967[1922]: 258).¹³⁰

It is probably impossible to establish when the *vilavilairevo* ceremony was first introduced to Beqa. However, after reconstructing the Sawau tribe's oral accounts, it appears certain that by the time the Sawau occupied the hilltop fortification of Navakaisese between the chieftaincies of Ratu Golea and Ratu Daruniivilevu at the end of the eighteenth century, the 'gift' of the *vilavilairevo* was already their exclusive

¹³⁰ Adolph Brewster, formerly Adolph Joske, arrived in Fiji in September 1870. He worked there until 1910 as the Governor's Commissioner of Colo North and East in the mountain provinces of Viti Levu, the main island.

possession.¹³¹ Since then, *vilavilairevo* has remained unique to the Sawau of Beqa. It has never been claimed by any other clan or tribe throughout Fiji. Paul Geraghty observes that “all specifically associated terms with *vilavilairevo* in Beqa, they are all very Fijian; none of them seems [to have] been borrowed from Tahiti or somewhere else. They are very Beqan words. In Tahiti, [it] is not surprising that the ritual of *umu tī* has absorbed and incorporated the Tahitian cosmogony” (Geraghty pers. comm.)¹³² A lexicon of *umu tī* terms used in Beqa and Ra’iātea shows that the terms are unique to the local Beqa dialect. For example, *vilavilairevo* is *rikata na lovo* in Fijian/Bauan; *masawe* is *vasili* in Fijian/Bauan; and there is no word for *matagi* (red *Cordyline*) in Fijian/Bauan. Geraghty points out that just because we do not find any Fijian terms in Raiatean does not mean that they did not come from Fiji; it might mean that when they came they were ‘indigenized’ to suit the local dialect.¹³³

I suspect that the *vilavilairevo* ceremony was not a “latter-day ceremony” as Oliver (1974: 94) believes, but that it was acquired before Christianity was introduced to Beqa. I suggest that the ceremony was performed by members of the Naivilaqata clan of the Sawau *yavusa* of Beqa as a regulative practice, in that it regulated practical activities. A comparative example is how agricultural rites in the Trobriand islands are interwoven with the technical activities of gardening, while also encoding aesthetic values and

¹³¹ Oral accounts indicate that while *vilavilairevo* was brought to Navakaisese from Tuiqalita, the first *vilavilairevo* ceremony was performed at Malovo, an upland garden accessible from Navakaisese. According to Carson, *umu tī* were consistently located in the hills, perhaps because *Cordyline* grows in the uplands (2002: 355).

¹³² Interview Feb. 15 2005 h. 14:00, University of the South Pacific, Suva. Serge Dunis, a linguist at the Université de la Polynésie Française in Tahiti, also agrees that the ritual might have originated in Fiji (pers. comm. 2/8/2006, ASAO, San Diego).

¹³³ He observes “when the rifle was introduced into Fiji, [instead of calling it a rifle] it was called the *dakai*, which is the old Fijian term for a bow and the gun powder itself was called *nuku* which means sand, so all the introduced terminology was completely Fijianized” (Geraghty pers. comm. 2/15/2005, USP, Suva).

mythical associations and anticipating about the success of the next yam harvest (Tambiah 1979, 1985). Similarly, the ‘land dive’ (*nagol*) ritual in the South Pentecost island in Vanuatu was always performed in association with the yam harvest (Jolly 1994). In Beqa, the cultural elaboration of the *vilavilairevo* emerged from a rite of increase that regulated the practical activity of harvesting and cooking of *masawe* or *matagi* roots (Allardyce 1904; Lindt 1893; Roth 1933; Thomson 1894).¹³⁴

Walking on hot stones and consuming *Cordyline* rhizomes constitute related Ancestral Polynesian stratagems adopted in response to subsistence’s exigencies in a resource poor and unpredictable island environment. Reserves were limited and there were periods of scarcity due to drought, floods and cyclones.¹³⁵ Ancestral Polynesian food preservation

¹³⁴ In Beqa, only ninety-year-old Bete Levu Sevanaia Waqasaqa used the term *matagi* to indicate red *Cordyline* (Sevanaia Waqasaqa interview 11/24/2004, h.12:00, 15:00 and 1/4/2005 h. 11:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa). *Matagi* or *matangi* is a Polynesian (Samoan, Tongan, Tikopian, Tahitian and Maori) term meaning ‘wind’ (*cagi* in Fijian, pronounced ‘thangi’). The word is everywhere associated with *tī*: *tī matagi* (Samoa), *tī matangi* (Tikopia), *tī rau matangi* (Rarotonga), *tī matani* (Tonga) (Ehrlich 1999: 495). Hocart discusses the ‘Matangi Women’ of Lau, Fiji, also called the ‘Two Ladies’ (*ko i rau a marama*). These two goddesses, the “mother of bad desire and mother of good desire” of Waitabu (Taveuni island) were “good for war, sickness, all things that men are in need of they bring to pass” (Hocart 1929: 214-5).

¹³⁵ For example, Beqa’s oral accounts from the nineteenth century conserve a memory of surviving a great flood caused by the snake god, Degei (Brewster 1922: 90; Fornander 1973[1878-1885]: 88-9; Thomson, 1968[1908]: 18; Waterhouse 1997[1866]: 252-3; Wilkes 1845: 207). Degei, part serpent, part stone, and supreme god and creator of the Fijian world, fruits and men “deluged the world in punishing the sin of his rebellious creatures” (Waterhouse 1997[1866]: 250-1). The stone aspect is “significant of eternal duration” (Waterhouse 1997[1866]: 251). According to Brewster, Degei originally came from Samoa. His totem being a snake, ancestral worship deified him and subsequently he became known under that form only. “All ancestral spirits or originating spirits had totems, whose shapes they could take, resuming their own again at will. The transformation is called *lia*, and Ndeng-ei [Degei] was *lia eng-ata* (change into snake), that is he could become a serpent at will and man again whenever he desired (Brewster 1922: 84-5).

While Reverend Joseph Waterhouse finds an analogy between the flood ordered by Fijian supreme snake god Degei irated for the killing of his favorite bird Turukawa and Noah’s flood (Waterhouse 1997[1866]: 252-3), Father Jean de Marzan (see next Chapter for biographic details) argues that the deluge in Fiji was ‘partial’ and not ‘universal’, thus he sees no connection with the one described in the Bible. It should be noted that the story of a Great Flood sent by God or the gods to destroy civilization as an act of divine retribution is a widespread theme in Polynesian

strategies included sun-drying, smoking or baking taro and other plants in order to store them for months (Kirch & Green 2001: 159). Analysis of the *Cordyline fruticosa* and *terminalis*' roots and stems reveals that they contains a soluble poly-saccharide composed mainly of fructose. The root was also baked and stored to supply carbohydrates (Carson 2002; Fankhauser 1987). Counihan (1999) argues that food scarcity mirrors and exacerbates social distinctions, as studies on the cultural context of the Fijian body, bodily aesthetics, food exchange, care and social cohesion delineate (Becker 1995; Deane 1921; Spencer 1941). Counihan (1999) and Mintz (1985) observe that sugar reproduces and sustains hierarchy and power. Initially a desirable commodity prerogative of the higher social circles, eventually sugar became an emulative icon accessible and ostentated by the lower ones. Using the past tense, we can state that the baking of the sweet (*gasagasa*)¹³⁶ *Cordyline (masawe)* constituted the central part of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony.

Christian agencies attempted to eradicate such 'heathen' practices, but tourism made the firewalking ritual both more effective and less meaningful. I argue that there

mythology (see Ra'iātea, Tahiti, Marquesas, Hawai'i). World's cultures past and present have stories of a 'great flood' that devastated earlier civilization, which Eliade interprets as "a restoration of primordial chaos" (Eliade 1971[1954]: 59). Interestingly, from de Marzan's myth reconstruction emerges that the island of Beqa was not submerged, for Rokowa ("the Noble Flood Tide" Brewster 1922: 90) desperately looking for the god-like canoe Rogovoka ("the Far Famed Ebb" Brewster *ibid.*) has to step with one foot on Beqa and the other on Naitata Flats, a coral reef formation south of Navua (de Marzan 1972[ca1891-1925]b: 1). Fornander, who also believes that the Polynesian version of the Flood did not derive from either the Arab or Hebrew originals, reporting a different account assumes that "all agree that the highest places were covered, and the remnant of the human race saved in some vessel, which was at last left by the subsiding waters of Mbenga [sic]; hence the Mbengans [sic] draw their claim to stand first in Fijian rank" (Fornander 1973[1878-1885]: 88-9). Furthermore, Thomson disagrees with Fornander's chronology, observing that the only way to calculate dates in Fiji are the natives' genealogies calculated by generations. Every district in Fiji has its own tradition and he assumes that the floods occurred in Rewa and Bua provinces in the last 125 years (mid 18th century) "have already been canonized in the realm of myth" (Thomson, 1968[1908]: 18; see also Gordon-Cumming 1901[1881]: 348).

¹³⁶ Beqan dialect, *gasagasa* corresponds to Fijian/Bauan *kamikamica*.

was progressive specialization or habituation of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony to specific performative and practical socio-economic needs of the community. Grimes observes that it would be a serious distortion to assume that ritual change is a prerogative of formally educated, technologically driven societies or that ritual stagnation is characteristic of traditional societies (Grimes 2000: 191). Ritual custodians and performers are not just carriers, transmitters and bearers of cultural heritage, they are also agents of cultural change. The result of this process, which Grimes calls “selective remembering and forgetting” (2000: 191), is a series of ritual steps constituting the ‘modern’ *vilavilairevo* ceremony. Despite abbreviations and elisions, it appears consistent with ceremonial knowledge emerging from early pre-Cession accounts (e.g., Allardyce 1904; Lindt 1893; Thomson 1894) and the *italanoa* (stories) and anecdotes I collected during my fieldwork.

<i>Vilavilairevo</i> ceremony (present time)	Ritual steps
Preparation	Before the ceremony the <i>bete</i> in charge of the ceremony and some <i>dauvila</i> (the firewalkers) collect enough <i>drau ni balabala</i> (dry leaves of tree fern <i>Cyathea lunulata</i>) to make anklets (<i>vesa ni yava</i>) and <i>drau ni dogo</i> (mangrove leaves, <i>Rhizophora mangle</i>), commonly referred to as <i>draunikau ba</i> , to cover the pit at the end of the performance.
Heating the <i>lovo</i>	Once the <i>lovo</i> has been heated for 3-4 hours with logs placed under the stones, the <i>vilavilairevo</i> ceremony can commence.
Presentation to the spectators	The presentation of the performance is designed and organized by hotels and cultural centers in specific firewalking arenas. In most cases each step of the ceremony is commented upon by an MC. Archival records suggest that in the past there was no presentation or explanation of the ceremony to the eyewitnesses (Allardyce 1904; Lindt 1893; Roth 1933; Thomson 1894).
1 st call <i>Na Kau</i> (wooden poles, <i>na i uso</i>).	The <i>bete</i> supervises the <i>dauvila</i> in removing all the burned braches from the <i>vatu</i> (stones) and clearing the surface of the stones of any embers.
2 nd call <i>Wa lai</i> (large vine, <i>Entada scandens</i>).	The <i>bete</i> supervises the arrangement of the stones by the <i>dauvila</i> , who drag them with large vines,

	rolling them into position until all the stones are level inside the <i>lovo</i> .
3 rd call <i>Balabala</i> (tree fern <i>Cyathea lunulata</i>).	Two <i>dauvila</i> carry a long tree fern stalk (<i>waqabalabala</i>). It is laid across the pit according to the specific direction indicated by the <i>bete</i> . This is the most important aspect of the preparation of the ceremony, for it is believed that hundreds of <i>veli</i> , the little gods of firewalking, are hanging on it and that they will lie on the stones allowing the <i>dauvila</i> to walk on their backs without getting burned. ¹³⁷ After all the stones are arranged, the <i>dauvila</i> exit the pit's grounds, waiting for the 4 th call.
4 th call <i>O vutu</i> ('everything is ready').	All the <i>dauvila</i> re-enter the ceremonial grounds. The <i>bete</i> divides them in four groups which will perform four rounds, crossing the <i>lovo</i> from the four cardinal directions indicated by the <i>bete</i> .
Chant <i>Rogo saka na wekada</i> <i>Na italanoa u sa dolava</i> <i>Na italanoa ni vanua yawa</i> <i>Ko au na gone mai wasawasa</i> <i>Na daunivucu nei Dakuwaqa.</i> <i>Tiko voli ma lodoni</i> <i>E rorogo na domo ni talevoni</i> <i>Talevoni toka mai Naidovi</i> <i>Na italanoa u sa kerea</i> <i>Meu bau rogoca.</i> <i>Yaco mai kau sa qai galu</i> <i>E qeqera tu na wai ni mataqu</i> <i>Sa yali e dua na Salulasu</i> <i>Dou sa bula Saka na wekaqu</i> <i>Me rogoci na noqu italanoa</i> <i>Ko iau e dua na luveni lota</i> <i>Na noqu i tavo e vakaloloma.</i>	After the firewalking, the <i>dauvila</i> cover the pit with mangrove leaves (<i>draunikau ba</i> ; <i>Rhizophora mangle</i>). The <i>dauvila</i> squatting near the smoking <i>lovo</i> or (among the Soliyanga and Naceva) sitting or standing on the mangrove leaves on the <i>lovo</i> then chant the following song. Listen my dear relatives The story I'm going to reveal The story of a far land I'm the child from the sea I'm the composer of Dakuwaqa I was in London The phone rang, a call from Naidovi I then asked him to reveal the story to me. After I heard the story I was speechless Tears rolled down my face We've lost a dear one Bula relatives of mine Please hear my story I'm one of the children of <i>lota</i> My behavior is not good.

Table 2.12

The final chant was added in the 1960s. The popular song is obviously of modern

¹³⁷ *Veli* are fairy creatures or gnomes found in the mountainous areas of Fiji.

origin (‘London’, ‘telephone’). in modern times in Rukua (see Wright, *Pacific Islands Monthly* August 1951: 27). It was not intended for the *vilavilairevo* ceremony, but was introduced by Sawau groups from Beqa to mark the end of the performance for tourists who would not know it was not traditional.¹³⁸ The chant was added purely for aesthetic reasons. Other than that it mentions the name Dakuwaqa, its inclusion in the ceremony is incidental.¹³⁹

<i>Vilavilairevo</i> ceremony (pre-Cession time)	Ritual steps and elements lost, elided or modified
Time	In the past, the ceremony was calendrical or transitional and was performed during the day. It is now performed throughout the week at the hotels and resorts of Viti Levu and usually in the evenings to obtain the maximum choreographic effect. The actual firewalk takes less than 15 minutes.
Location	In the past, <i>vilavilairevo</i> was performed only on Beqa in proximity to the village. In the mid 1950s, they started having occasional performances at the Grand Pacific Hotel, at Albert Park, at the Thurston Botanical Gardens, at the Fiji Museum, at the former Government House, and at the Hibiscus Festival. Today, with the exception of a few groups performing for the resorts or tourists coming to Beqa, <i>vilavilairevo</i> is mainly performed on Viti Levu.
Firewalkers (<i>dauvila</i>)	In the past, only the <i>dauvila</i> related to the Naivilaqata (priestly clan) of the Sawau tribe were allowed to perform. Today the ritual is extended to other groups within the Sawau tribe and has also been appropriated by non-authorized members of other tribes outside Beqa.

¹³⁸ The groups from Yanuca Island use the same melody, but different lyrics from a recent composition by Peceli Vitukawalu called *Sere ni Vila* (A Song of Firewalking). The song states that the arrival of Europeans or “Christianity did not reduce the power of the little people of Tui Namoliwai [*Sa gauna ni lotu ego e sega ni malumu mai kaukauwa tikoga Tui Namoliwai*]” (quoted in Crosby 1988b: 70-1). Chapter 5 discusses songs, music and drums introduced to embellish shows for tourists.

¹³⁹ Dakuwaqa, the guardian of the reef entrance to the islands, assumes human form with a shark tattooed on his belly. Worshipped under different names throughout Fiji, the shark god is described as living in a cave below the *bure kalou* (god-house) (Derrick 2001[1946]: 12). “(Mr Tooth-for-uncooked-food) is said to have saved Dalia, whose canoe was capsized between Kadavu and Vatulele. The god-shark landed his worshippers at Beqa” (Waterhouse 1997[1866]: 264-5). The shark god Masilaca, a friend of Dakuwaqa, is in the Tui Sawau’s genealogy.

Taboos	Until the 1960s, <i>tabu</i> restrictions on sexual intercourse and consumption of coconut milk were observed for a month before the ceremony. These restrictions were reduced to a couple of weeks and today are practically ignored.
Summoning	In the past, several accounts (especially from Rukua) maintain that the day before the <i>vilavilairevo</i> , the <i>bete</i> placed thin vines over cracks in the ground and across the stream around the Namoliwai river region to facilitate the coming of the <i>veli</i> to the ceremony. This is no longer done.
<i>Balabala</i> (tree fern, <i>Cyathea lunulata</i>)	In the past, the <i>drau ni balabala</i> (leaves) were collected solely from the tree ferns of the Namoliwai river. Today, leaves from any tree fern (<i>Cyathea lunulata</i>), even outside Beqa, are acceptable.
Costumes	In the past, the preparation of the costumes took more than a month and involved the labor of the whole village. In addition, <i>Cordyline</i> leaves were tied to the wrists of the <i>dauvila</i> . Today, the <i>Cordyline</i> leaves are not part of the costume nor are they placed around the <i>lovo</i> as in Tahiti. Instead, handpainted <i>kiekie</i> (skirts) made with durable, colored <i>voivoi</i> (<i>Pandanus caricosus</i>) and <i>salusalu</i> (<i>Pandanus</i> neck garlands) are re-used from performance to performance.
Size of the <i>lovo</i>	In the 1930s, the <i>lovo</i> was over 15 feet across. Today, the firewalking arenas at most hotels are sometimes less than half that size.
Shape of the <i>lovo</i>	In the past, villagers dug a steep pit, hence the name <i>vilavilairevo</i> , ‘jumping-into-the-lovo’. Since the mid 1950s, the stones have been piled up to allow a better view of the <i>dauvila</i> stepping on them.
Shape of the stones	In the past, the stones (<i>vatu</i>) were very large and used solely for the <i>vilavilairevo</i> and baking <i>masawe</i> . ¹⁴⁰
Heating the <i>lovo</i>	In the past, heating large <i>lovo</i> required a tremendous amount of firewood and 6 to 8 hours of heating.
Participation	Participants formerly included at least 14 pairs (28 people). The practice of walking in pairs remained in use in Rukua until the late 1970s. Today, with all the commitments at different hotels, in some cases there are less than 6 <i>dauvila</i> at a performance and they mostly walk single file.
Gender	The <i>vilavilairevo</i> was traditionally performed solely by men of the Sawau tribe. For a short period of time in the 1960s, following the request of a hotel manager, <i>bete levu</i> Pita Koroisavulevu allowed women from the Sawau tribes to perform.
Abeyancy	In the past, before the ceremony, the <i>dauvila</i> hid in a

¹⁴⁰ Sometimes the firewalking stones are improperly called *qoca*, but *qoca* are smaller stones heated in the *lovo* to bake food.

	hut outside the ceremonial grounds waiting for the call of the <i>bete</i> to perform.
Style of fire-walking	In the past, the <i>dauvila</i> took a long concentric walk on the hot stones. Today, the walk is limited to crossing the fire-pit from four cardinal points.
Baking the <i>Cordyline</i> (<i>masawe</i> or <i>matagi</i>)	The <i>draunikau ba</i> leaves that cover the <i>lovo</i> were originally used to protect the <i>masawe</i> while they were baked for four days. ¹⁴¹ In the 1950s, baking the <i>masawe</i> was discontinued and the roots were only placed in part of the <i>lovo</i> symbolically. Today, no <i>masawe</i> are put in the <i>lovo</i> intended for a firewalk.
Thanksgiving offering (<i>madralli</i>)	The offering (<i>cabo</i>) to the <i>veli</i> of a pudding (<i>qalu</i>) made of taro mixed with baked <i>masawe</i> sugar has been discontinued.

Table 2.13

The *qalu* pudding made of *dalo* (taro) and *masawe* is like *vakalolo*, a Fijian pudding prepared with coconut milk. *Qalu* does not include coconut milk because the *veli* dislike it. The *qalu* was thin and only small amounts were prepared, since the *veli* are smaller than men. It was cooked on top of the *lovo* used for *vilavilairevo*. The *dalo* and the *masawe* were first baked on the *lovo*, then cut and mixed together to make a pudding. The pudding was then wrapped in banana leaves, tied up, and presented (*cabo*) as thanksgiving (*na ka ga ni vakavinavinaka*) by the *bete* to the *veli*. Everybody in the village was then welcome to consume it. Miriama Naioro, granddaughter of *bete levu* Sevanaia Waqasaqa (1866-1938), daughter of a firewalking mother and father, and briefly in the 1960s a firewalker herself, explains:

Eratou cakava ko ratou na bete. Ena kau ga mai na dalo me mai caka, e rua beka ga na dalo baleta na lewe ni vakalolo qo e dau ka lalai. Na drau ni vasili ga na kenai olo. Me kua ni vakasuka, na kena suka na wai ni vasili e dau vavi. Ni caka vakaoqo e kamikamica saraga me vaka na suka. Ena laki biu ga, tukuni ga mei madralli e sa caka sara na kana.

It is the *bete* who prepares it. To make the pudding, often a couple of pieces of *dalo* [taro] is enough, for the portions must be small. Then it is

¹⁴¹ Apenisa Kuruiwaca, interview 12/12004 h. 12:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

wrapped with a *vasili* [*Cordyline*] leaf.¹⁴² It does not need to be sweetened. The baked *Cordyline* provides the sweetness to the ingredients of the pudding. Its sweet syrup extracted is just like sugar. After it is prepared, the *madrali* is announced and eating begins. (Naïoro pers. comm.)¹⁴³

Neither Legend nor Folktale

Old myths grow and new ones are born, Leeming (2000: 19) observes, but in Huahine-Ra'iātea only the prototypical language of the *umu tī* invocations recurs (Tupua in Henry 1893: 106-7 and Young 1925: 216-7; Arii-peu in Kenn 1949: 38-42). The Huahine-Raiatean *umu tī* tradition does not include any legend that associates it with a particular ancestor or member of a certain clan or tribe. This is unusual in Polynesian mythology, for ritual acts always had explicit meanings (Oliver 1974: 111).

Though generic assertions that all myths originated in rituals should be refuted (Kirk 1971: 12, 25), almost every ritual can be referred back to some myth (Berndt and Berndt 1964: 226). Leach (after Durkheim) postulates that myth implies ritual, ritual implies myth: myth is in words while ritual is in action (Leach 1954, 1966 quoted in Kirk 1971: 23 and Rappaport 1999: 151). For Kluchohn, myth and ritual have a common psychological basis: ritual is a symbolic dramatization of the needs of a society and mythology is the realization of the same needs (Kluchohn 1942: 78). In Austin's terms, myth without ritual has at best perlocutionary but not illocutionary force (Austin 1970[1961]).

Unlike in the Huahine-Raiatean tradition, all the early accounts on the *vilavilairevo* ceremony contain a version of the *italanoa* (story) of *nai tekitekivu ni*

¹⁴² *Vasili* and *qai* mean *masawe* in Fijian/Bauan.

¹⁴³ Interview Dec. 22 2004 h.9:15, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

vilavilairevo (how firewalking began) in Beqa.¹⁴⁴ To be more than transitory and become traditional, tales must accommodate the collective identity formation, memory, tastes and ambitions of a society (Kirk 1971: 282). The *italanoa* of the *vilavilairevo* has been constantly reaffirmed among the Sawau people not just as an explanation of the ritual, but as the rationale for their having been given possession of this gift. It is a testimony to the Sawau's own society, culture, and modes of thought (Ben-Amos 1992).

In a western classificatory sense, the *italanoa* of how *vilavilairevo* began in Beqa can be assimilated to the genre of an ancient 'myth', which is inherently believed to be true.¹⁴⁵ Their characters are both human beings and animals who sometime have strange powers, but are not necessarily worshipped or propitiated.¹⁴⁶ They explain the origin of natural or cultural phenomena such as the changing of the seasons, cooking, or pottery-making. Eliade argues that "every myth shows how reality came into existence, whether it to be the total reality, the cosmos, or only a fragment, an island, a species of plant, a

¹⁴⁴ Notable are those from *Na Mata* 1885 (translated by Jackson 1894); Thomson 1894; Toganivalu 1914 (translated by Beauclerc); Bulivou 1978 (translated by Tubanavau in Crosby 1988a); and Kuruiwaca 2004 (translated by Nemani). See Appendix F for a comparison of these origin stories. Appendix L includes the variants used by the FVB and PHCC.

¹⁴⁵ For Athenian philosopher Plato, the word *mythologia* meant no more than story-telling, usually about legendary figures and imaginative accounts of supernatural events. Myths start their life as simple tales, something uttered in a wide range of sense, not necessarily connected with 'religion' but rich with symbolic imagery that establishes a context for humans within the cosmos, defines our relationship with supernatural powers, and depicts the deeds of deities and superhuman heroes (Ashliman 2004: 32). They are ritualized speech acts (*mythos*) passed down from generation to generation that have become traditional sacred beliefs. Kirk (1971), after Boas and Benedict, notes a mobility from one genre to the other, especially from folktale into myth. Myths that seem no more than paradoxical fantasies often have some serious purpose beyond that of telling a story. Ben-Amos (1992) argues that, while myths are believed to be true, legends purport to be true. In other words, legends possess certain qualities that give the tales verisimilitude, including no happenings that are outside the realm of possibility. Folktales on the other hand, are inherently untrue, mostly told for pure entertainment, they are self-consciously fictitious oral narratives in which supernatural elements are subsidiary (Ashliman 2004: 34; Ben-Amos 1992: 102; Kirk 1971: 37; Malinowski 1922, 1971[1926]).

¹⁴⁶ Myths, therefore, do not have the markings of religion (Leeming 1990: 4; Lévi-Strauss 1962, 1964).

human institution” (Eliade 1959[1957]: 97). The narrative of the gift of *vilavilairevo* represents a typical Polynesian exchange system and reciprocal social relations (Mauss 1954[1923-4]).

The *italanoa* of *vilavilairevo* origins is constituted by the storyteller, the performance and the context (Ben-Amos 1992: 111). The storyteller articulates the narrative tradition and is the illocutionary vehicle for its continuity and transformation. Tales are dependent on a number of variables in the storyteller: personal temperament, experience, verbal proficiency and gender. Performance, in the case of the *italanoa* of *vilavilairevo*, is represented in both the storyteller’s artistic responsibility as well in the perlocutionary performativeness implicit in the tale (Schechner 1994; Tambiah 1979). Each variant of the tale reinterprets the sequence of verbal utterances, acts and gestures performed by Tuiqalita and Tui Namoliwai. These include: Tuiqalita promising a gift to the storyteller; Tuiqalita discovering Tui Namoliwai; Tui Namoliwai pleading for his life; Tuiqalita negotiating and accepting the gift of *vilavilairevo*; Tuiqalita and Tui Namoliwai performing the *vilavilairevo*; their agreement and farewell.

Oral narrative performance is context dependent (Ben-Amos 1992: 112). The occasion for the *vilavilairevo* narration may be either a formal entertainment associated with the ceremony or an informal entertainment not immediately associated with the ceremony. The story itself is a gift promised to the storyteller for his stories.

Na vilavilairevo e a tekivu e na dua na rogo i tukuni. Na dau ni tukuni na yacana o Dredre ka dau kenai vakarau mera dau yalataka vua o ira na mai vakarorogo na nodra nabu (ka ni vakavinavinaka) me ra na kauta mai.

Firewalking initially began by listening to storytelling. The storyteller’s name was Dredre and it was the rule that all those who came to listen to Dredre’s stories promised to bring him a gift, a token of appreciation

(*nabu*) upon his next visit.¹⁴⁷

A composite version of the rest of the tale is summarized as follows:¹⁴⁸

After everybody gathered in the large *bure* called Nakauyama at Navakaisese. Dedre, the story-teller, called upon each man present to name his gift (*nabu*) for him. Tuiqalita (or Tui Qalita), a *bete* of the *mataqali* Naivilaqata, promised to bring an eel he had seen in a hole upstream in the Namoliwai river region. Then Dredre started telling his story and continued until midnight. Early the next morning, Tuiqalita hiked to the upper Namoliwai river to the spot where he remembered seen the eel. He noticed that something was moving in its murky water. He reached inside with his hand and pulled out a small piece of cloth (*malo*), evidently used by a child. Reaching further down he touched a man's hand, then a head. Tuiqalita firmly caught one arm and hauled his prey out.

At this point, the little man, whose name was Tui Namoliwai, made several offers in exchange for having his life spared by Tuiqalita.¹⁴⁹ First he offered to be Tuiqalita's god of war (*kalou ni valu*), but Tuiqalita declined, arguing that in a recent battle he slew the enemy single-handed, and that Beqa is a small island and he required no assistance.

Next he offered to be Tuiqalita's god of *tiqa* (*kalou ni veitiqa*), but Tuiqalita declined, saying that he was already beating everybody.¹⁵⁰

Then he offered to be Tuiqalita's god of goods (*kalou ni yau*), but Tuiqalita declined, saying that he was receiving plenty of *malo* (cloth) from the nearby island of Kadavu.

Then he offered to be Tuiqalita's god of safe voyages (*kalou ni soko*), but Tuiqalita declined, protesting that he was a landsman and hated sailing.

Then he offered be Tuiqalita's god of love (*kalou ni yalewa*), but Tuiqalita declined, saying that one woman was sufficient for him, since he was not a big chief.

Finally, Tui Namoliwai offered Tuiqalita the power over fire. He said then he could be buried in a *masawe lovo* for four days and come out unharmed and alive. Tuiqalita accepted, but suspecting that Tui Namoliwai was deceiving him to kill him, suggested that the gift be simply to pass unharmed through the oven.

¹⁴⁷ Apenisa Kuruiwaca, 11/15/2004 h.19:00, Naceva, Beqa. Translated by Laisiasa Cavakiqali.

¹⁴⁸ See Appendix F for transcriptions of selected variants of the *italanoa* of *vilavilairevo*. In Chapter 5, I discuss how the story has been distorted for use in hotels and tourist media.

¹⁴⁹ The early variants of the tale all mention the same offers (*Na Mata* 1885, translated by Jackson 1894; Thomson 1894; Allardyce 1904a, 1904b; Toganivalu 1914 translated by Beauclerc; Roth 1933; Bulivou 1978 translated by Tubanavou in Crosby 1988a).

¹⁵⁰ The Fijian game *tiqa* used to be very popular among men in the village. It was played by throwing a reed javelin about 4 feet long, armed with a pointed piece of hard, heavy wood 3 to 6 inches long. It was thrown from the forefinger covered with a piece of cloth. It was thrown so it bounced along the ground; the winner was the man who could throw it farthest.

Tui Namoliwai and Tuiqalita prepared a large oven, and when the stones were hot, holding hands, they stepped into the pit and walked around it several times.¹⁵¹ At this point, Tuiqalita told Tui Namoliwai that his life was spared. Finally, Tui Namoliwai promised Tuiqalita that the gift of power over fire would be his and his descendants for ever, whether on Beqa or in Tonga.¹⁵²

Ia ni sa qai la'ki sevutaki sara ni ra sa vavi masawe levu na kai Sawau ki Nalovo [Malovo] edua na yaca ni vanua ko ya sa qai butuka kina ko Tuiqalita era sa kurabui kecega kina ni ra qai raica.

One day, when the Sawau people at Malovo were cooking a large oven of *masawe*, Tuiqalita stepped on it, and all who saw him were astonished at what they saw. (*Na Mata* 1885: 2)

Ni sa caka tale nai karua ni lovo sa qai kerea mera sa cakava I vata me ra tovolea ka vakadinadinataka. Sa qai tekivu mai kea na nodra vila tiko ana tamata me yacova tu mai na siga ni kau. Sa dua na ka kalougata ni mai kunea tu na cauravou koya na isolisoli veivakakurabuitaki koya. Yaco na gauna e muri me ra valuti e Navakaisese ke sa kauta vata tu kei ira na vilavilairevo.

The next time, Tui Qalita asked some of the people to step into the pit with him, which they did, and no one was burned. Much later, when the village of Navakaisese was abandoned, the people took this remarkable gift [*isolisoli*] with them, and still to the present day their descendants practice this unusual power of *vilavilairevo*. (Mika Tubanavou, pers. comm. with Bulivou 1978, quoted in Crosby 1988a: 62)

Each time the *italanoa* is recited, it emotionally reinforces and validates the ritual and the audience's respect for their ancestors. Each narration re-establishes indexical relationships with paths and sites on Beqa. Narratives transforms places into landmarks in time and space, making them monuments of island history (Siikala & Siikala 2005: 119, 131). The *italanoa* of *vilavilairevo* in Beqa has the character of catharsis, a form of emotional cleansing firstly recognized by Aristotle. Oceanic and Beqan oral aesthetics recall the empathic effect of the narrative on the audience in response to the actions of the

¹⁵¹ The 'holding hands' detail is found only in Aporosa Bulivou's account from Rukua. It might explain the different styles of firewalking. The Rukuans walk on the *lovo* in pairs holding hands.

¹⁵² In Tonga stands for "in other countries," according to Thomson (1894: 201).

characters in the drama. Characteristic of both Greek and Oceanic myths is the conjunction of stereotypical animal and human characters, unique or surprising feats, having one character encounter both good and bad fortune, and a sudden climax generating pity, sorrow, or laughter in the audience.

The *legomenon* ('thing said') becomes the *drōmenon* ('thing performed'). Cathartic performances are often responses to anxious or fearful situations (Homans 1941: 164-72; Tambiah, 1968: 188). The *italanoa* of *vilavilairevo* could have served as the basis for the ceremony in which the ways of humanity and those of nature are psychologically reconciled. In other words, it could have accommodated the evolution of Beqan culture from an age of gods to an age when men and gods mingled freely, allowing both sacred and profane experiences to be manifest. An ontological notion of the world lies behind the *vilavilairevo* ceremony. Building on Durkheim's (1995[1912]) division between positive and negative rites, the *vilavilairevo* ceremony appears 'positive' rite in that it brings the sacred and profane realms together and the ordinary lives of Sawau tribe members become infused with the ideal and the normative.

Neither Ordeal nor Cannibalism

The gift (*isolisoli*) of *vilavilairevo* does not involve negotiating with any evil power; nor is it the result of evildoing. The *madrali* and the use of *waqabalabala* (tree fern stalk; *Cyathea lunulata*) and *draunibalabala* (dry leaves of tree fern) in the *vilavilairevo* ceremony do not involve the presentation or consumption of *yaqona* or *vakadraunikau* (witchcraft, lit. 'practicing sorcery with leaves'), *vakacuru* (willing possession) or

vakatevoro (unwilling possession).¹⁵³ Furthermore, I argue in this section that the ceremony is neither an ordeal nor a reference to cannibalism.¹⁵⁴

According to Morinis (1985), the core element of all ordeals of initiation include infliction of pain in a social context.¹⁵⁵ Grimes distinguishes initiation ceremonies as: rites of childhood that follow birth but precede entry into adolescence; adolescence initiations that facilitate an exit from childhood and entry into adolescence; and adult initiations that negotiate an exit from adolescence and an entry into early adulthood (Grimes 2000: 103). Sawau's *vilavilairevo* ceremony does not imply the segmentation of the life cycle into several stages or phases. *Vilavilairevo* seems to have the character of an ordeal but it is not an initiation, since it is neither puberty-related nor a test of faith. Furthermore, the object of firewalking is to pass through fire without loss of life, injury or pain, so it is not an ordeal.

Rites of passage are based upon the obvious fact of change. Many consist in ritualized ceremonies that challenge the participant physically in order to formalize the leaving of one phase and the entering of another, allowing a new construction of self. The *vilavilairevo* ceremony does not involve any test of character or ability to pass through

¹⁵³ In Chapter 4, I discuss the absence of elements of witchcraft in the *vilavilairevo* ceremony.

¹⁵⁴ It is worth remembering that the *vilavilairevo* ceremony of Beqa has not been definitively addressed in the anthropological literature. Only Bigay, et al.'s (1981) geo-economic survey of Beqa published by USP in the late 1970s and Crosby's (1988b) ethno-archaeological fieldwork conducted in the late 1980s were based upon immersion in the Sawau culture with long-term participant observation in Rukua village.

¹⁵⁵ The term ordeal come from the medieval *ordalium*, the Latinized form of the German word *Urteil* (sentence, judgment). The biblical precedent of the medieval 'judgment of God' helps explain not only the adaptation of the Roman Christian ethos to Germanic customs, but also the relationship between ordeal and divinity. Ordeal by fire as a form of divine judgment can be found in myths from the dawn of Greek tragedy (e.g., Sophocles' *Antigone* discussed by Benz, 1969:241). Sabbatucci talks about cults where undergoing "ordeal by fire" was evidence of a superhuman reality. "The best known of these powers is the one that allows men to walk unharmed over burning brands or red-hot stones" (Sabbatucci 1987: 96).

the next life phase (cf., Eliade 1958; Van Gennep 1960). I observe, however, that the performative dimension - that is, the deliberate, self-conscious ‘doing’ of highly symbolic actions in public—is the key to what makes ritual performance and spectacle different from ordeals of initiation and rites of passage. In Grimes’ words “we *undergo* passages, but we *enact* rites” (2000: 5 emphasis in original).

With regard to the Oceanic ritual tradition, I separate non-volitional and volitional rites. Initiations and rites of passage are non-volitional and typically characterized by some of the following elements: showing respect, being humiliated or intimidated, undergoing strategic deceptions or surprises perpetrated by elders, gaining access to previously off-limit areas, experiencing disenchantment in the face of revelations, learning sexual or secret knowledge, having to keep secrets from those who are younger or uninitiated, being separated or secluded, overcoming pain, fasting, sleep deprivation, being subject to unpleasant treatment, regressing temporarily to childlike states, experiencing distortion of one’s sense of time, space, causality or identity, having one’s status elevated, passing through initiatory levels or degrees, receiving a new name, being received or welcomed by elders, or becoming an initiatory elder. Examples are the Sambia male puberty initiation rites (Herdt 1981, 1982, 1987) and Iatmul scarification or cicatrization applied to young men at initiation (Bateson 1958 [1936]; Bishop and Prins 2003; Pigliascio and Francalanci 1993; Schäublin-Hauser 1985, 1995; Silverman 2001).

Performative rites mainly conducted by adults are usually volitional. In some instances, they dramatize bravery and aspects of village social life. They are associated with peril and analgesia but do not involve any change in the status quo. These characterize firewalking ceremonies of Beqa, Tahiti, Biak, Santo and the Pentecost

Island, the North Baining fire-dance, and the Pentecost Island's land dive. In Oceania, adults, rather than children, are motivated to perform these empowering rites. Adults recognize that the psycho-physiological, symbolic, and functional effects of pain or risk are instrumental to the goals they are trying to reach in the rite (Morinis 1985).

In Beqa, the techniques of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony are achieved through a cultural, learned, non-obligatory ritualized practice. *Vilavilairevo* displays elements that appear in traditional ceremonies from various indigenous cultures: being taught by parents or elders; learning and execution of rules; overcoming fear; observing food, sexual and other behavioral taboos; dramatizing myths; and using costumery. Ceremony is the glue of society (Grimes 2000: 122). Victor Turner (1967, 1969) observes that ceremonies are rituals that merely confirm the status quo rather than transforming it. In his vision, *ritual* is subversive, so it is the opposite of *ceremony*, which he defines as conserving culture and guarding the normative behavior.

In an esophoric article published on the *Annals of Tourism Research* a decade ago, Stymeist (1996) labeled *vilavilairevo* a “prime example of ‘staged authenticity’” and “phoney folk culture” because it was rarely performed by the actual descendants of Tuiqalita (i.e., *mataqali* and *itokatoka* Naivilaqata). In his uninformed interpretation, Stymeist argues that “from witnessing the event at close hand, it is apparent that the walking on the hot stones of the lovo is (or can be) a painful experience, truly an ordeal. Vilavilairevo is not always easily and successfully accomplished” (1996: 13). After confounding *vilavilairevo* with *kalou rere* and *luveniwai* rites (see Chapter 4), Stymeist writes that “the many prominent, multivocal references to war and cannibalism in

vilavilairevo are unmistakable” (Stymeist 1996: 8).¹⁵⁶ He makes this assumption because he believes that in the past, “before being cut up and baked in the lovo the victims were typically placed in a sitting position and insulted and mutilated” (Stymeist 1996: 8). Stymeist argues that “after walking across and inside the circumference of the oven four times, vilavilairevo participants sit huddled together in the center of the pit in an action recalling the posture forced upon the slain preparatory to their being cooked. Thus arranged, the participants sing a lele, a dirge or lament offered over the bodies of the dead” (Stymeist 1996: 9). Stymeist suggests that *vilavilairevo* “embodies numerous referents to war and cannibalism” (Stymeist (1996: 15) and that the ritual is about the symbolic “conquering of the earth-oven in which a human being might be buried and baked” (Stymeist 1996: 9). He draws these conjectures on the basis of an arguably spurious rhymed adaptation of the *italanoa* of *vilavilairevo*:

‘What may thy name be, libertine?/ Methinks a rogue I spy’:/ The dwarf
he sighed and then replied,/ ‘Tui Namoliwai.’/ ‘Namoliwai, Namoliwai,/’
Now, harken unto me,/ I sought an eel, but thou this night/ Mine offering
shalt be.’/ ‘The clubbing and the baking whole/ Will follow in due course:/’
But these are items of detail/ Which call for no discourse.’ (Davidson
1920: 93)

Cannibalism in the Fiji islands dates back more than two thousand years (Best 1984; Degusta 1999, 2000; Spenneman 1987). By 1643, when Dutch explorer Abel Tasman arrived in the islands, cannibalism was rampant; it continued for another couple of centuries. Sahlins observes that for over 200 years, Europeans have been trying to find out what moved Fijians to eat each other, but all the explanations have been insufficient (Sahlins 1983: 89). The question seems to be not why Fijians practiced cannibalism, but

¹⁵⁶ Stymeist writes with a nonchalance evocative of Jules Verne’s *Among the Cannibals* and a dilettantism worthy of John McDermott’s (1984[1978]) “Cannibalism, Firewalking, Witchcraft and Other Wiggles” in *How to get Lost and Found in Fiji*.

why it was so pervasive and institutionalized (Kirch 2000: 160). Similarly, we should not ask why the Sawau people practiced the *vilavilairevo*, but why this practice of allegedly ‘conquering the oven’ did not become pervasive and institutionalized among other tribes at war in Fiji who also used *masawe* ovens. In other words, why in centuries of exo-cannibalism, this deflecting practice (of mimicking the *bokola* - cannibal victims) should have established only in Beqa? Beqa is a small island not particularly notorious for cannibalism compared to Rewa, Ra, Bau,¹⁵⁷ Somosomo,¹⁵⁸ and Rakiraki.¹⁵⁹ Elsewhere in Fiji, cannibal orgies were also probably infrequent (Derrick 2002[1946]: 21) and confined to ceremonial sacrifices in celebration of victory, launching of a chief’s canoe or the lowering of a chief’s mast (Thomson 1908: 103).

In addition, I observe that the Huahine-Raitean’s ‘anthropophagic tradition’ is not very rich, for in Polynesia human sacrifices were mostly symbolic, involving mutilation and insults in addition to the actual consumption of the flesh of the victims (Cook, 1999[1955-74]{1773,1777,1785}; Ellis, 1853[1829]; Mariner 1817; Oliver 1974; Portlock, 1789; Valeri 1985). Thus, it appears unlikely that, whether the ritual was transmitted from Fiji to Huahine-Ra’iātea or vice versa, an identical ceremony with the same rules and syntactic structure had a completely different function. Moreover, nowhere in the Pacific (Ra’iātea-Huahine-Taha’a, Cook Islands, Aotearoa, Vanuatu, Biak and Hawai‘i) was the firewalking ceremony associated with cannibalistic practices. At the same time, in some fringes of Tonga and Samoa reached by cannibalism, there is no

¹⁵⁷ Bau was infamous for having cannibal chiefs such as Tanoa, his young brother Ratu Navuaka (Tui Veikoso) and his son Seru (Cakobau) (Thomson 1968[1908]: 109; Derrick 2001[1946]).

¹⁵⁸ Somosomo was infamous for renowned man-eaters Tui Cakau and Tui Kilakila (Thomson 1968[1908]: 109).

¹⁵⁹ Rakiraki was infamous for Re Undreudre, the most notorious cannibal in the missionary accounts (Thomson 1968[1908]: 109; Henderson 1931: 57; Derrick 2001[1946]: 22).

evidence of firewalking.¹⁶⁰ Cultural forms persist by being kept in existence by their cognitive motivation or disappear from the cultural repertoire when their cognitive function becomes for some reason obsolete (Holy 1989: 281). Regardless of the eradication of cannibalism, which they are not ashamed to confess used to occur, Fijians maintained the *vilavilarevo* in their cultural repertoire as a highly regarded form of spectacle unique to the Sawau tribe of Beqa.

Another problem with Stymeist's conclusions is his underestimation of the baking process of the *Cordyline*. Drawing on Fulton's (1902: 194, 201) supposition that Beqan 'magicians' carried special stones from island to island that did not get very hot, Stymeist observes that the *masawe* ovens has "somewhat a lower surface temperature than ordinary lovos [sic] being constructed solely of *valu ndina* [sic] (a porous basalt) with poor conductivity and a slow rate of radiation" (Stymeist 1996: 6).¹⁶¹ An archaeological diagnostic exam of the earth oven employed for the cooking of the *Cordyline* in different parts of the Pacific shows a distinctive set of physical traits not found in other kinds of earth ovens: large oven size, large amount of combustible fuel tremendous cooking temperature, prolonged cooking time, intense heat alteration of surrounding sediment and extensive heat alteration of oven stones (Carson 2002: 362-3). Heating stones are typically cobbles of volcanic stone (basalt). The heat from the initial wood fire is transferred into the stones and these continue to radiate heat within the oven throughout the period of cooking (Carson 2002: 354). Residue analysis of Maori earth ovens reveals an amino-acid profile different from that of fish or other animals and human flesh

¹⁶⁰ Obeyesekere observes that "there is no reference to sacrificial anthropophagy in Tonga in Cook's time, but Polynesian ethnographers, including Williamson, note that it was introduced from Fiji in the early nineteenth century" (Obeyesekere 2005: 85).

¹⁶¹ He probably meant '*vatu dina*' (stone).

(Fankhauser 1993: 15-6). Thus, it is plausible that the Maori, though also former cannibals, used *umu tī* for the sole purpose of baking *Cordyline*.

Three kinds of leaves that assisted the process of digestion of human flesh were wrapped around dismembered victims and baked with on heated stones: *malawaci* (*Trophis anthropophagorum*), *tudauro* (*Omalanthus pedicellatus*) and *borodina* (*Solanum anthropophagorum*) (Seemann 1973[1862]: 176; Capell 1941). *Cordyline* leaves were not used for this purpose.¹⁶² Furthermore, from the oral accounts collected in Beqa, it appears that the *lovo* used for *vilavilavairovo* and the cooking *Cordyline* were never used for any other food. These ovens were different from cannibal ovens, which had smaller cobbles used to cook *dalo* (taro).

Sahlins postulates that cannibalism exists *in nuce* in most sacrificial ceremonies (1983: 88). Some agricultural people drew a link between death and rebirth in the cycle of fertilization and harvest. The notion that plants might need human sacrifice could have occurred in some societies. However, Fijian and Polynesian agrarian and horticultural rites consisted mostly of symbolic sacrifices, which are different from exo-cannibalism. In Tahiti, first fruits and ripening-of-the-year ceremonies were large-scale public ceremonies, mainly consisting of public offerings of food and other valuables to the communities' tutelary spirits and chiefs (Ellis 1853[1829]: 218).

Upon arrival at the *marae* all the objects brought along were placed inside its enclosing walls and the priests began the services, which consisted of thanksgivings and other long prayers. Then, the *tāu pure* [invocation prayer], the local sacrificer, placed upon the altar a small amount of the received fruits and other comestibles, as offerings to the gods, and

¹⁶² Seemann visited Beqa on September 5, 1860 to collect *dilo* (*Colophillum inophyllum*), an excellent remedy for rheumatism. Seemann describes well the *masawe* or *vasili toga* (*Cordyline*) as having a large root that “weighs from 10 to 14 lbs., and when baked, resembles in taste and degree of sweetness, as near as possible that of stick-liquorice. The Fijians chew it, or use it for sweetening puddings” (Seemann 1973[1862]: 306).

designated the remainder for the host chief. (Moerenhout 1837: I, 519, quoted in Oliver 1974: 261)

Similarly, in ancient Fiji, the accumulation of the first yams accumulated was occasion for a great feast. Relatives from other villages participated with their ancestral village groups. The yams were carried to the *bete* and formally presented to the chief, who in exchange presented *yaqona* and *tabua*.

It should first be noted that the gruesome details of Fijian cannibal feasts (e.g., Endicott 1923; Erskine 1987[1853]; Diapea (Jackson) 1928; Lockerby 1982[1925]) upon which Stymiest draws for his argument were not necessarily accurate first-hand accounts as claimed, but constructions of idealized anthropophagy rituals. For example, William Endicott, third mate on the *Glide*, later published a book titled *Wrecked Among Cannibals in the Fijis*. An appendix included the story “A Cannibal Feast in the Fiji Islands by an Eye-Witness,” supposedly of having seen such a feast in March 1831. The story was also published in his home-town newspaper, *The Danvers Courier* on August 16, 1845. Sahlins argues that “A Cannibal Feast in the Fiji Islands by an Eye-Witness” was actually written by Endicott’s shipmate Henry Fowler (also of Danvers), since an ‘F’ is inscribed at the bottom of the newspaper article (Sahlins 2003: 3).¹⁶³ Nowhere in Endicott’s original log, conserved at the Peabody Essex Museum, is there “any reference to his having witnessed a cannibal feast” (Obeyesekere 2005: 167). Obeyesekere (2005)

¹⁶³ Similarly, Captain John Elphinstone Erskine’s *Journal of a Cruise...in Her Majesty’s Ship Havannah*, contains an appendix of the “Jackson Narrative”, written by John Jackson, alias ‘Cannibal Jack’ or William Diapea. Jackson wrote *Cannibal Jack: the True Autobiography of a White Man in the South Seas* in 1889 when he was seventy years old for a European reading public. Jackson/Diapea said that he had written an autobiography of the first twenty-six years of his life in 19 copy books, but these have never been found. Obeyesekere points out that, unlike Endicott case, we cannot prove that the accounts of cannibalism in *Cannibal Jack* are fabrications. However, it is significantly inconsistent with the earlier “Jackson Narrative” in Erskine’s book. Obeyesekere concludes that the missing autobiography is also a fictional device.

believes that who actually wrote the cannibal feast story is not as important as that it was a typical fabrication of ritual, cannibalistic vengeance. Many scholars have argued that the nineteenth century ethnographic imagination of cannibalism was a colonizing trope, a tool of the Empire to create a moral distance from the ‘other’ (Arens 1979; Dixon 2001; Goldman 1999; Halvaksz 2006; Hulme 1998; Kilgour 2001; Lindenbaum 2004; Obeyesekere 2005, 1998).¹⁶⁴ ‘Cannibal talks’ are one of the most important topics in cultural criticism today, for cannibalism pierces discussions of difference and identity, savagery and civilization, and the consequences of Orientalism (Kilgour 2001: vii; Lindenbaum 2004: 476; Obeyesekere 2005: 265).

Another of Styemeist’s errors is his argument that ‘sitting’ on the *lovo* emulates a former practice of placing the *bokola* (cannibal victims) in a sitting position and insulting and mutilating before cooking them (Styemeist 1996: 8). The supposed sitting posture of cannibal victims comes from a single reference in Peter Dillon’s description of a cannibal feast he claims to have seen on September 6, 1813 in Bau (Dillon 1829: 14-5; discussed in Clunie 2003[1977]: 55; Davidson 1975: 36; Obeyesekere 2005: 199).¹⁶⁵

Fires were prepared and ovens heated for the reception of the bodies of our ill-fated companions, who, as well as the Bow [Bau] chiefs and their slaughtered men, were brought to the fires in the following manner. Two of the Vilear [Wailea] party placed a stick or limb of a tree on their shoulders, over which were thrown the body of their victims, with their

¹⁶⁴ Representations of the savage ‘other’ were enormously popular in Europe. Another example is the *Journal of William Lockerby: Sandalwood Trader in the Fijian Islands During the Years 1808-1809*, which contains a gruesome account of a cannibal feast (1925: 44-5, 59-9). William Lockerby was a mate on the *Jenny*. His captain left him stranded in Vanua Levu, where he lived from May 1808 to June 1809 under the protection of the chief of Bua. Obeyesekere argues that, while there is no doubt that he was present in Vanua Levu, his account was not written in Fiji, but long after and that he injected gruesome details into his narrative to please the reading public (Obeyesekere 2005: 190-1).

¹⁶⁵ Peter Dillon was born in Martinique, the son of an Irish immigrant. A self-proclaimed explorer, raconteur, and discoverer of the fate of the La Pérouse expedition, he sailed to Fiji in 1813 as third mate in the *Hunter* under Captain James Robson to look for sandalwood.

legs hanging downwards on one side, and their heads on the other. They were thus carried in triumph to the ovens prepared to receive them. Here they were placed in a sitting posture while the savages sung and danced with joy over their prizes, and fired several musket-balls through each of the corpses, all the muskets of the slain having fallen into their hands. No sooner was this ceremony over than the priests began to cut and dissect those unfortunate men in our presence. Their flesh was immediately placed in the ovens to be baked and prepared as a repast for the victors. (Dillon 1829: 14-5)

No other accounts from seamen, traders or travelers (e.g., Eagleston 1833-36; Oliver 1846; Patterson 1925; Wallis 1851; Wilkes, 1945[1845]; Johnston 1889) or missionaries (e.g., Cargill 1839; Hunt 1839-48; Jaggar, 1988[1838-45]; Williams, 1982[1858]; Waterhouse, 1997[1866]; Watsford 1900) or any archival and oral records of *vilavilairevo* ceremony in Beqa include a description of either *bokola* or *dauvila* assuming such a position in the *lovo*. Obeyesekere believes that Dillon, who was holed up during a battle, was unlikely to have seen such activities and probably invented the scene to present himself as a hero in the midst of savages (Obeyesekere 2005: 198-9).¹⁶⁶

My ethnographic findings indicate that the practice of squatting (never sitting) on the *lovo* at the end of the performance was introduced in 1975 by Adi Lisitewa, a woman from Lau who appropriated and attempted to spectacularize the Yanuca group's performance; squatting was subsequently adopted by groups performing at the Pacific Harbour Cultural Centre (Sahlins 2003: 5). When I asked the ninety-year-old *bete levu*, Sevanaia Waqasaqa, about this, he emphasized that the *mataqali-itokatoka* Naivilaqata of

¹⁶⁶ An analysis of Dillon's description of the battle also reveals invented names and inconsistencies such as the number of dead Europeans (Obeyesekere 2005: 220). Dillon's graphic account was nevertheless used in Maynard and Dumas' *The Whalers* (Hutchinson 1937). Maynard was the surgeon of a French whaling ship in New Zealand around 1838. Several of his works about his adventures were edited by his friend Alexandre Dumas (Père), including *Les Baleiniers* (Paris, Michel Lévy Frères, 2 vols., 1860, translated in 1937 as *The Whalers*). Dillon's adventures appeared also in George Bayly's *Sea Life Sixty Years Ago* (1885), a collection of sentimental reminiscences based on his unpublished *Journal of Voyages* (1831), and in the *Asiatic Journal* (Calcutta, 1827, xxiv: 778-79).

Dakuibeqa, as custodians of the *vilavilairevo*, do not allow such circus acts:

Keitou ga na kena itaukei... Na dabe vakacava qo, me dua e gesa na daligana! [We are the custodians... What sitting are you talking about?! It would result in burning our ears!] (Waqasaqa pers. comm.)¹⁶⁷

As for the *lele* (dirge) reported by Styemeist (1996: 9), both archival records and oral accounts collected in Beqa dismiss the claim that *dauvila* (firewalkers) used to sing a lament at the end of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony to mourn the bodies of the dead. Tippetts observes that a *lele* is a broken chant with meditative pauses; it includes several long stanzas mourning the dead and honoring heroes and their military exploits (1980: 48-50). No such songs have been reported accompanying firewalking. The Rukuan song (reproduced in the previous section) was recently introduced to embellish the performance by firewalking impresario Peceli Vitukawalu in the 1960s. Its language is obviously modern and it does not make any reference to heroes, death, the ceremony itself, and so on. Chapter 5 will return to the role of the ‘mediators’, like Peceli Vitukawalu, Adi Lisitewa, in the process of glamourization and spectacularization of the performance in modern times.

Conclusion

This study shows that the *vilavilairevo* ceremony has multiple meanings. Drawing on Arno’s (2003: 816) elegant argument that there is an “ethnological chiasmus” between Hawaiian and Fijian practices, I suggest that Beqan and Huahine-Raiatean modes of representation are parallel but not identical. Huahine-Ra’iātea, having lost the practice, has preserved in Raiatean descendents’ memories a verbal account of the use of the *umu*

¹⁶⁷ Interview Nov. 24 2004 h. 15:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

tī, while Beqa has preserved the practice but lost the verbal explanations. As a ‘blurred genre’, *vilavilairevo* has survived even though participants are unable to furnish verbal explanations of its symbolic meaning. Ritual meanings may be un verbalized because they surpass and confound language. In his reconstruction of the meaning of the *dranukilikili* funerary ritual in Fiji, Arno argues that “ritual acts that seem most natural and obvious to participants—so natural that they cannot and need not be reduced to verbal formulation—may have reference to cultural dimensions of social experience that can be investigated ethnographically” (2003: 810). Paraphrasing Wittgeinstein, Arno suggests not asking about the meaning of the act, but asking how it is used (2003: 815).

The gift brought back by Tuiqalita to the storyteller is not a *nabu* (a material present), but an *isolisoli* (gift, grant, permit). It may be interpreted as an endowment or a natural talent. The gift of firewalking becomes an *iloloma* (token of love); it suggests collective care. It establishes a synallagmatic relation between the cognition of endowment and that of custodianship among the *mataqali* Naivilaqata and by extension the *yavusa* Sawau.

Gifts engender obligations to reciprocate. Having spared the life of the *veli*’s chief (Tui Namoliwai), which represented his homage (*nabu*) to the storyteller, Tuiqalita accepts the gift (*isolisoli*) of *vilavilairevo*. In the logic of the myth, it is a gift of nourishment, a technological activity that helps increase the reserve supply of starch and sugar (Wallace 1987).¹⁶⁸ Vaughan explains the logic of gift-giving:

The gift interaction requires the giver’s ability to recognize needs of others and to produce or fashion something to satisfy them. The satisfaction of needs is not done by humans ahistorically, but always takes place at a

¹⁶⁸ Wallace (1987) uses the term ‘technological’ when a ritual process aims at regulating non-human nature, such as rites to increase food supply, or avert misfortune.

certain cultural and historical level with the means and methods that are present in the society at a certain degree of development of productive forces, and within some mode of production. (Vaughan 2002: 96)

Turner (1984) observes that the *isevu*, the annual first fruit ceremony consisting of a ritual offering of the newly harvested yams (*Dioscorea alata*) is a ritual of increase, an appeal for health, well-being for the community and prosperity. In Hocart's words it is "a cooperation for life" (1936: 37 quoted in Turner 1984: 139). First fruit offerings to the gods were regular ritual practices in Fiji.¹⁶⁹ Turner writes that "never in living memory has the *isevu* failed to be held" (Turner 1984: 39). Reverend Williams observes that:

The worship of the gods of Fiji is not a regular and constant service, but merely suggested by circumstances, or dictated by emergency or fear. There are, however, certain superstitious ceremonies which are duly observed; such as the [*i*]*sevu*—presenting the first fruits of yams; [*i*]*tadravu*—an offering made at the close of the year. (Williams: 1982[1858]: 230-1)¹⁷⁰

In Beqa, the belief as well as the fear that the next harvest might be lean if the *isevu* is not offered to the chief and the *lotu* is still prevalent (Tuwere 2002: 60). In fact, the *isevu ni kalou* (to the ancestral god) accommodated very well within the Christian tradition. However, the *vilavilavirevo* traditionally is not associated to the *isevu*. The *vilavilavirevo* is more than an *isevu* (first fruit ceremony) (Crosby 1988a: 58; Thomson 1894: 196) or a *solevu* (ceremonial exchange) (Crosby 1988a: 58; Ravuvu 1995: 49). The answers I collected about the firewalking ceremony in Beqa, compared to the archival records of

¹⁶⁹ Traditionally, the day of the first-fruit offering was selected by the village priest (Sahlins 1962: 344). "Like many Fijian rituals, the first fruit ceremony lasts four days; for the elders of the *itaukei* it amounts to a four day vigil. Within the *isevu* there are three stages: *na isevu ni kalou*, or 'isevu of the ancestral spirit', involves the eating of yams by men of those *matagali* designated as *itaukei*. The second stage, *na isevu ni vanua*, or 'isevu of the land' involves the presentation of yams to the chief. The third stage, *na isevu ni koile*, involves women's presentation of *koile*, a type of wild yam, to the men gathered in the place of vigil" (Turner 1984: 137).

¹⁷⁰ *Itadravu* is an offering made to the *kalou* when the yams are all planted and there is only a little food left. It is the last offering the *kalou* will receive that year.

firewalking in Oceania, lead me to suspect that it arose independently of the pan-Fijian yam harvest ceremonies held every February. It seems more local and transitional than the calendrical customs typical of rites of increase. *Vilavilairevo*, ‘jumping into the earth oven’, describes a ceremony complementary to the ritual baking of *Cordyline* rhizomes in the oven.

The *vilavilairevo* has the character of a first-fruit ceremony, but is not a typical *isevu*. Neither the myth nor a diachronic analysis of the *vilavilairevo* suggests it was an *isevu*. There is no suggestion that the rite was seasonal. Accounts collected in Beqa confirm that the yam harvest and ceremonial offerings are traditionally held in February (*Vula ni sevu*), but there is no specific season for harvesting *Cordyline*. *Cordyline* is harvested according to a preference for younger or older plants, which have different flavors (Carson 2002; Fankhauser 1987: 16-7).¹⁷¹ I argue that the fact that *Cordyline* was available year-round means that cooking its rhizomes, as acted out in *vilavilairevo*, was related to issues of scarcity and unpredictable environmental conditions. It represented the islanders’ survival even if there was not a good yam harvest.

The *vilavilairevo* ceremony witnessed by the Vice-Regal party in 1892 in Rukua village was held in September, not February (Thomson 1894: 195).¹⁷² In Lindt’s (1893) account, Jonacani Dabea had been contacted in August 1892 by Governor Thurston to hold the ceremony, for which the village would be recompensed. Dabea explained why they could not have the ceremony immediately:

The present unusually wet season had delayed the yam planting [*Vula*

¹⁷¹ Reverend Williams observes that “*masawe* (*Dracaena terminalis*)—the tī-tree—costs little care” (1982[1858]: 62).

¹⁷² Present were the Governor and Lady Thurston, the Chief Medical Officer of the Colony Bolton Glanvil Corney and his wife, Thomson (1894) and Lindt (1893).

icukicuki – August] and the Beqa folks were still engaged at this important work; moreover that it would take several weeks' time to cut the necessary quantity of fuel. (Dabea quoted in Lindt 1893: 51)

While the yam harvest had been lean, there was a large quantity of *masawe* on hand:

Bundles of *masawe* root were hurled into the pit, and in a few seconds the floor of the oven was completely covered with them... The excitement now became general, more green leaves and reeds were brought and thrown in, and then the earth round the rim of the pit was dug up and the excavation covered with it in order to keep the heat required to roast the roots. (Lindt 1893: 52)

Thomson, who also attended, described the ceremony in greater detail, including the reason for holding it at the Europeans' behest:

Once every year, the *masawe*, a dracaena [*Cordyline*] that grows in profusion on the grassy hillside of the island, becomes fit to yield the sugar of which its fibrous root is full. To render it fit to eat the roots must be baked among hot stones for four days. A great pit is dug, and filled with large stones and blazing logs, and when these have burned down and the stones are at white heat, the oven is ready for the *masawe*. It is at this stage that the clan Na Ivilankata [Naivilaqata], favoured of the gods, is called to 'leap into the oven' (*rikata na lovo*), and walk unharmed upon the hot stones that would scorch and wither the feet of any but the descendants of the dauntless Tui Nkualita [Tuiqalita]. Twice only had the Europeans been fortunate enough to see the *masawe* cooked, and so marvelous had been the tales they told, and so cynical the skepticism with which they had been received, that nothing short of another performance before witnesses and the photographic camera would have satisfied the average 'old hand'... [At the end of the ceremony] baskets of the dracaena root are flung to them, more leaves and then the bystanders and every one joins in shovelling earth over all till the pit is gone, and a smoking mound of fresh earth takes place. This will keep hot for four days, and then the *masawe* will be cooked. (Thomson 1894: 195)

I argue that, as in Moala where it was customary to have first-fruit offerings of *dawa* (Oceanic lychee or *Pometia pinnata*), *uto* (breadfruit) and *dalo* (taro) followed by a feast (Sahlins 1962: 345-6), in Beqa the *vilavilairevo* was staged whenever they had large quantity of *masawe* to be baked (*Na Mata* 1885: 2; Toganivalu translated by Beauclerc 1914: 2).

Such practical activities as baking roots become ritualized and instilled into the social fiber over time (Dunnell 1999). Tambiah (1979) and Schechner (1994) observe that all rituals are performative because they are acts done and all performances are ritualized because they are codified and repeated. Tambiah notes that some performative ritual acts are regulative in that they orient and regulate a practical or technical activity while also addressing the aesthetic style of that activity (e.g., rice cultivation, canoe-making). The ceremonial cooking of the *Cordyline* rhizomes, a central part of the original ritual process of Fijian firewalking, was introduced in Beqan society as a regulative practice. It regulated the practical activity of the harvesting and cooking of the *Cordyline* plants, organized labor, encoded aesthetic values and mythical associations, and provided sustenance. It also anticipated the success of the next harvest of *Cordyline*.

According to Tambiah (1979, 1985), there are three ways in which ritual becomes performative: it involves doing things; it is staged and uses multiple media to afford participants an intense experience; and it includes indexical values (choice of site, degree of elaboration or redundancy). Interpreting the myth of the act of acceptance by Tuiqalita, intrinsic to the ritual performance of the *vilavilavirevo* ceremony, is not simply performative but *meta*-performative. According to Rappaport “rituals do more than achieve conventional effects through conventional procedures. They establish the conventions in terms of which those effects are achieved” (Rappaport 1999: 126).

Luz and White observe that studying ritual is important for understanding the sociocultural transformation of personal experience (Luz and White 1986: 413). Homans suggests that when a person has followed the technical procedures at his command and performed the traditional rituals, his or her primary anxiety remains latent and something

essential is achieved in that the ritual generates confidence (Homans 1941: 172; Malonowski 1925). Following this stage is a process of rationalization, which includes the statements associated with the ritual and symbolization of fundamental myths in that society. Ritual functions within society to dispel anxiety and maintain social organization (Homans 1941: 172). Ritual is a performance of a complex sequence of symbolic acts whose repetition and dependence alleviates doubt, anxiety and fear (Turner 1986: 75).

Bauman (1989), drawing on Singer (1972), observes that temporally and spatially bounded events provide context to community members while hiding the deepest codes and signifiers of their culture. Spectacular public performances reintegrate the whole community (Da Matta 1981; Handelman 1990; Pink 1998;). Building on Geertz (1973), Bell argues that ritual dramatizes, enacts, materializes, or performs a system of symbols, suggesting that activity is a secondary, physical manifestation or expression of thought. Furthermore, by enacting a symbolic system, ritual integrates two irreducible aspects of symbols: worldview and ethos. In other words, ritual is to the symbols it dramatizes as action is to thought (Bell 1992: 31-2).

Until recently, every time *masawe* were cooked, the *bete* of the Naivilaqata clan offered a small but symbolically important portion of the *qalu* pudding to the *veli*. These offerings were a necessary condition for the desacralization of the new harvest, which only then could be put to the “profane use” of human consumption (Henninger 1987: 548). These offerings are acts of thanksgiving for the food harvested. They are symbolic homage to the supreme being to whom everything belongs and who therefore cannot be enriched (Schmidt 1922, quoted in Henninger *ibid.*). The fact that mythical tradition

states that the *masawe* should be baked for four days, which is the time it actually takes for its sugar content to become edible, is a sufficient sociological reason for the act; the meaning of the rite constitutes its own goal (Staal 1989: 131).¹⁷³

I showed that the nonverbal referential meanings enable me to dismiss theories evoking symbolic referents between *vilavilairevo* and cannibalism. It might be possible to empirically demonstrate that other symbolic values are enacted in the ceremony, however. The unequivocal spectacular element of physical danger of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony may recall to some masculine tropes of *mana* and bravado, or a manifestation of superiority to natural calamity such as the Great Flood. For others, the ceremony has no symbolic value; it is entertainment for the chief, a means of collective empowerment, or just a custom (Sahlins 1983: 89). This study is neither intended to resolve debates concerning the mind/body condition of firewalkers nor to translate the ritual actions of firewalking into words conveying their ultimate meaning. My purpose is to assert the status and dignity of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony as a traditional cultural expression in Sawau society.

Jolly (1992a) points out that our constructions of real pasts are not sacrosanct. She suggests that western scholars should look more comparatively at the encoding of past-present relations in a variety of symbolic constitutions of tradition. At the same time, we should be wary of treating culture as an exotic tradition or placing on it labels of ‘myth-making’, ‘staged authenticity’, or ‘phoney folk culture’. Scholars should stop questioning whether tradition is ‘genuine’ or ‘spurious’. They should not forget that the

¹⁷³ “The physical properties of *tī* roots necessitates the unusually high temperature of *umu tī*. *Tī* roots contain a branched structure of fructan with a high degree of polymerisation (Meier and Reid 1982: 449) and only an intense and prolonged heat can depolymerise and hydrolise the material effectively (Wandsnider 1997: 3, 23)” (Carson 2002: 348).

various cultural forms and practices encountered in the present are also products of modern social, political and cultural processes (Lindenbaum 2004: 482). Finney observes that this is as much an age of cultural revival as it is of globalization, particularly in the Pacific where indigenous peoples are still under foreign rule or have only recently escaped from it to find that the outside world and its influences are still pressing heavily on them. Maintaining or reviving traditional cultural expression is a way of demonstrating cultural identity and worth in the face of lingering colonial structures and increasing pressures of globalization (Finney 2003, 1999).

Cultures may come from the past, but they are also made and remade in the present. Acknowledging this entails “an ethically conscious provocative shift in research methods” (Fluehr-Lobban 2003: 226; 2006). In other words, ethnographers should ask how to promote respectful interpretation and treatment of native cultures and indigenous forms of self-expression within mass societies (Brown 2003: 10). How do we know our interpretations are correct when dealing with intangible native cultural expressions and traditional knowledge such as rituals, performances and unrecorded oral histories? How can those who possess an intangible cultural heritage made up of traditional stories, songs, and performances obtain *sui generis* protection against any form of misuse misrepresentation, and appropriation? These are the questions I address in the rest of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 3

Kinship, Clanship and Ownership

Introduction: A Passage to India

The first time I heard the *italanoa* (story) of the Beqan firewalkers' trip to India and consequent death of the *bete levu* (high priest) Semi Raikadra in New Delhi, was during my pre-fieldwork survey in July 2002. During the course of my ethnography I heard several variants of this memorable account, which reflects and reinforces the idea of cultural heritage and kinship's ethics among the Sawau tribe's *mataqali* Naivilaqata (priestly clan). The three main aspects of the story are Semi's consciousness of his role of high priest of the *vilavilairevo*, the fiduciary duty to his clan (Naivilaqata) and his community (Sawau), and lastly his 'self-sacrifice'.

Between November and December 1972, the *bete levu* Semi Raikadra,¹⁷⁴ the Tui Sawau Ratu Mitieli Baisagale, and a group of firewalkers from Beqa were invited to participate in a six week trip to India sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce of Fiji and the Fiji Visitors Bureau to attend the 72nd *Asia Trade Show*. Pan Am offered the group a free trip via Honolulu and Bangkok. After a brief exchange of gifts, and commemorative pictures at Nadi's airport with Pan Am's general manager Mr. MacDonald, a few hours of flight later, in the middle of the night, the captain's voice interrupted the passengers' sleep announcing some mechanical problems, which would delay their arrival to Hawai'i.

The Boeing 747's engines were 'overloaded' (Vakaruivalu pers. comm.)¹⁷⁵ Semi,

¹⁷⁴ 1904-1972.

¹⁷⁵ Jan. 27, 2005, h. 18:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

who had been sleeping all the time, was informed of the incident only when they were starting their descent into Honolulu International Airport. Immediately, he realized what the problem was all about. Thousands of *veli*, the little gods of firewalking, were holding on the aircraft's wings. Thus, Semi firmly commanded them: "*Ni liu wani*" (take the lead [to India]). Needless to say, once re-boarded for Bangkok, the flight was smooth and without inconveniences.

Crosby (1988b) collected a similar story in relation to a trip to New Zealand in the early 20th century. The *bete levu* Sevanaia Waqasaqa,¹⁷⁶ the Tui Sawau Ratu Peceli Vitaikitoga, Ratu Mesui Toganiyadrava and Ratu Kelevi Biu, both from Rukua, accompanied a group of firewalkers from Dakuibeqa, Dakuni and Rukua to attend the *New Zealand International Exhibition* held in Christchurch in November 1905 (see Hammond 1924: 60). However, on their passage they also were accompanied by the *veli*, who completed a fantastic voyage in a tiny *balabala* (tree fern) trunk boat, surviving tidal waves and storms (Crosby 1988a, 1988b). In the account of that epic trip told by Ratu Kelevi Biu's son, Aporosa Bulivou, when the trunk boat of the *veli* passed the steamer, three tidal waves hit and shook the ship "the passengers and crew were all afraid as plates scattered and broke and tables fell over. The captain asked Ratu Mesui, the *bete* [from Rukua], what had happened and he replied that the waves had been cause by the spirits' boat passing them" (Aporosa Bulivou pers.comm., recorded by Mika Tubanavau in 1978, quoted in Crosby 1988a: 68).

Crosby observes that the anecdote of the little gods of firewalking serves a function. "It at once roots the story and the act of firewalking in a more distant past and

¹⁷⁶ 1866-1938.

keys it into other stories that are told of the origin of firewalking. In addition, it allows the little ancestral gods the fun of a trip to New Zealand, and maintains consistency with the very act of firewalking by allowing the *rere*¹⁷⁷ to be present, as they always must be to safeguard the feet of the performers” (Crosby 1988b: 161). Clearly, both the 1905 and the 1972 accounts inform the idea of the *bete*’s consciousness of his role of medium of traditional mythical themes, adapting those themes along with the bond between man and the gods of firewalking to the present, allowing the ritual to become immortal.

It was a cold winter in New Delhi that year, as Joketani Cokanasiga, the former FVB (Fiji Visitors Bureau) representative accompanying the group, today a former Minister of the Home Affairs, points out. He remembers that the first thing they did in New Delhi was to buy heaters to stay warm at night in the accommodations provided by the Indian Government. Semi Raikadra apparently was not feeling well in the days preceding their departure for India. His brother Pita Koroi at one point told him that he should not go, according to him Semi was risking his life for the ‘communal work’ (“*o au vinaka cake meu mate e na noqu cakacaka*”, Tambuavou pers. comm.)¹⁷⁸ It should be noted that in this context any material reward is secondary.

In Fijian society, labor is given not as an economic service, but as a social one, and considerable emphasis should be laid upon one’s role within the group and one’s obligations to one’s own group, for labor’s foundations remain kinship and locality of residence (Nayacakalou 1978: 116-119). *Cakacaka* (work), in this sense becomes the performance of a “kinship obligation” (*cakacaka ni yavusa*), for the framework within

¹⁷⁷ The term, less frequent and not to misunderstand with the *kalou rere* discussed in the next chapter, is a synonymous of *veli*, *gone* and *manumanu*, the little gods of firewalking of Beqa Island.

¹⁷⁸ To be interpreted also as *cakacaka vakavanua* (traditional rituals). Interview Dec. 7 2004 h. 15:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

which it takes place is primarily social, not economic (Nayacakalou 1978: 40, 137).

Four days before leaving for New Delhi the *bete levu* Semi and the *dauvila* (firewalkers) chosen to go to India had performed the traditional *madralli* (sacrifice) to express thanksgiving (*na ka ga ni vakavinavinaka*) to the little gods of firewalking (*veli* or *manumanu*) (see preparation described in Chapter 2). In India, in proximity to the firewalking performance Semi and the firewalkers (*dauvila*) were preparing for another *madralli*. In absence of the *masawe* (*Cordyline*), Semi authorized the *dauvila* to use some red bananas found in a New Delhi's street market. A pudding was made mixing the bananas sweet pulp with water and poured in twenty small cups—one for each of the participants in India's mission—which everybody drank.¹⁷⁹ In the meantime an excavator was digging a large pit and by 10:00am the fire was lit. The stones came from a nearby river, while the *dauvila* brought with them from Beqa the *balabala* leaves (*Cyathea lunulata*) and the *draunikau ba* leaves (*Rhizophora mangle*) to cover the *lovo* at the end of the ceremony. However, the *draunikau ba* had dried out, thus Semi authorized them to replace them with some local leaves.

The Sawau firewalkers had only one exhibition during the 72nd Asia Trade Show in New Delhi. Before the performance Semi talked to the Tui Sawau and to a 23 year old Samu Vakuruivalu telling them that everything was going to change in the *vilavilairevo* performance scheduled for that night, hence from now on. “He looked around, and said when we were all there, referring to the whole *mataqali* there, that there would be no more *madralli*. The *madralli* for the firewalking done in India was the last one” (Tabuavou

¹⁷⁹ Semi Raikadra, Tui Sawau (*Ratu* Mitieli Baisagale), Ratu Lefoni Uluilakeba (*Ratu* Mara's brother), Timoci Tabanuqa (acting as *matanivanua* to the Tui Sawau), Ratu Rodovi Verata, Marika Tivitivi, Samuela Vakuruivalu, Aseli Tabuavou, Paula Levulevu, Solomon Turaga, Joketani Cokanisiga, Ro Doviverata, Waisea Rokubu, Epi Nasaudrodro, Savenaca Kamikamica, Penieli Racolo, Isei Boladau, Peni Turaga, Pauliasi Babitu, Vilikesa Vulawau.

pers. comm.). “He also lifted all the taboos associated to the *vilavilairevo*, so that no more problem will arise while we come back to Fiji and perform firewalking again” (Tabanuqa pers. comm.). In addition, Semi made other changes. Firstly, only one selected group was supposed to walk, but he arranged that everybody participating in the trip to India would walk. Secondly, he modified the way of taking the walk inside the pit from a concentric one to a mere crossing of the fire-pit from its four cardinal points.

While the river stones were cracking for the intense heat under the feet of the Sawau firewalkers that Friday evening, on December 15, Semi was inexorably leading his last *vilavilairevo*. Semi lost consciousness right after the performance. “Joketani Cokanasiga tried desperately to warm up Semi’s cold body... we removed the *kiekie* [traditional skirt used by the firewalkers] changed him into a *sulu*, and rushed him to the hospital where he passed away in a matter of minutes. All the organs were removed in order to allow us to take him back to Fiji. We had to wait days in Delhi for Semi’s body to be prepared for the trip back to Fiji. All the *manumanu* came back this way [in Semi’s coffin]”¹⁸⁰ (Vakuruivalu pers. comm.)¹⁸¹ His last words to Samu were: “*Oqo na vutivuti gauna. Qai vakei a cara na i vilavilairevo*” (This is my time to go. You continue the *vilavilairevo*).

Modernity affects social relations, social practices and local social systems (Giddens 1990, 1991). I realized that the central element of this *italanoa* commonly inferred by all the members of the Sawau people is Semi’s act of self-sacrifice on behalf of the whole Sawau community to guarantee a continuity of the *vilavilairevo*

¹⁸⁰ According to the *Fiji Times*, the firewalkers’ performances in Tokyo and Honolulu were canceled and “Mr. Rory Scott, a representative of Pan American Airlines, said he had booked space for the coffin aboard the flight arriving at Nadi on Thursday [14 December 1972]” (*Fiji Times* 19 Dec. 1972).

¹⁸¹ Jan. 27, 2005, h. 18:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

performance, preparing his people to the change of times and modernity progressively affecting the *vilavilairevo* performance. Thus nowadays, when the proper leaves are not found other leaves can be used to cover the pit at the end of the ceremony, the pit diminished in size and depth,¹⁸² the time spent by the performers in the fire pit is shorter, the taboos are lifted, and the *madrali* is replaced by a short prayer to the Christian God.

Na gauna sa mai veisau kina ya na gauna ga eratou laki vilavilairevo kina ki Idia sa laki ndolava na bete levu me sa cegu na madrali , me sa dua ga na lotu sa caka na vilavilairevo. Na ka sa vakatara o bete levu na kena kawa kece sa tara.

The change became evident at the time the *vilavilairevo* was performed in India. The high priest [Semi Raikadra] ordered that the making of *madrali* should cease and that it should be replaced by a short prayer before the *vilavilairevo* is performed. All which the head priest has proposed, ordered, or allowed to happen is accepted by all of us. (Kuruiwaca pers. comm.)¹⁸³

Drawing on Becker's 1995 ethnography centered on body, self and society in Fiji, I suggest that particularly in the case of semi-isolated island communities like the Sawau, still regulating their life '*vakavanua*' and still holding shared rights to traditional economic resources like the *vilavilairevo*, social action is still guided by the tight affiliation of individuals with their community.

Fijian identity is grounded in one's connections to the immediate kinship group and social network. Ideally, individual activity is devoted to developing and reinforcing social relationships and promoting collective interests. Characterological traits and practices demonstrating self-sacrifice, generosity, and self-effacement in deference to community goals are highly valued and actively cultivated. (Becker 1995: 16-17)

Furthermore, Sahlins argues that "the main relationship of society are at once projected historically and embodied currently in the persons of authority" (1985: 47).

¹⁸² For the changes regarding the 'depth' and shape of the *lovo* is significant the agency of tourism as explained in Chapter 5.

¹⁸³ Dec. 1, 2004 h.12:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

Semi embodied the authority of the high priest of firewalking, whose decisions quite often are not questioned by anybody, including the *turaga ni yavusa* (Tui Sawau). Semi was evidently ill before leaving his village. The long trip and New Delhi's cold weather certainly were not beneficial to his health. However, the point is that his 'self-sacrifice' for his community shows a responsibility of the self for the other, a response to the deployments distinctive of modernity and hypermodernity. In Giddens' (1990, 1991) words, in a modernizing society the self becomes disembedded from communal and ascribed relations, notably those ascribed with kinship, and becomes developed by personal choices, and experiences. Semi's choice signifies the way the *vilavilavevo* ceremony represents a continuing project to maintain community's oneness, community's narratives and ontological security.

This *italanoa* introduces the themes of this chapter, where myth, fiction and reality pervade Sawau's recent history. For this purpose, while the following paragraph is purely historical, the rest of this chapter moves into a contemporary ethnographic perspective.

Bloodsheds and Brotherhoods: Sawau Recent History

When in 1980 a team of researchers from the University of South Pacific composed by John Bigay, Freda Rajotte, Jesoni Vitusagavulu,¹⁸⁴ Amelia Ravuvu, Mika Tubanavau and Mason Green started their reconstruction of Beqa's past (Bigay et al. 1981), they encountered an insurmountable obstacle, analogous to other regions of the world where the main knowledge of the past comes from oral tradition. "Facts become

¹⁸⁴ Currently Fiji's Ambassador to Washington, D.C.

fused with myth and legend, and the deeds of famous warriors grow more magnificent with telling, until it is impossible to distinguish between fiction and reality” (Bigay et al. 1981: 33). Crosby (1988b) observes that oral histories maintain a fundamental importance on Beqa. “They are not necessarily factually accurate representations of historical events. Rather, they are socio-political statements about the formation of groups” (Crosby 1988b: 210). For the purpose of this study, in order to introduce the Sawau social and political organization, I will present some historical facts reconstructed combining archival research, excerpts from the *Tukutuku Raraba*, written personal accounts of Sawau’s chiefly *mataqali* Nakoroqaqa members, and transcripts from interviews focusing on the period commonly referred to as ‘before the flag’, oscillating before and after the years Cakobau government.

The island of Beqa is divided in two *yavusa* (tribes) which occupy two distinct *vanua*: Sawau and Raviravi.¹⁸⁵ Both the *Tukutuku Raraba* and additional topographic research at the National Land Trust Board in Suva clearly confirm that the two *vanua* were co-existing as separate socio-political entities, a circumstance also delineated by Crosby (1988b). The Tui Raviravi and his brother, both high chiefs from Rewa related to the Vunivalu (Warlord of Rewa) landed at Coladuki bringing with them the entire *yavusa* (Bigay et al. 1981: 39). Coladuki is one of the oldest settlement on Beqa, a coastal flatland defended site with a single unit ring-ditch. Though during his archaeological survey in 1981 Crosby was not granted a permit to work on this site, he observes that typically these sites were found on raised beach flats or flat alluvial valley floors

¹⁸⁵ See map on Appendix G(iv).

characterized by raised circular areas enclosed by as many as three concentric ring-ditches, highly stylized with causeways crossing the inner ditch at regular intervals and clearly defined by their defensive boundaries. They all have evidence of *yavu* and stone alignment, usually with dense concentration of pottery and midden (Crosby 1988b: 37).

Through the *Tukutuku Raraba* of the Raviravi *yavusa*, told by Peni Butucama,¹⁸⁶ emerges that the two older brothers of the Vunivalu of Rewa looking for land, arrived and settled at Coladuki where they found the *kai Raviravi*, the Raviravi people. The obviously stereotyped layout of the official recorded *yavusa* ‘histories’ (*Tukutuku Raraba*) reveals that the people lived in a village named after them, whose *kalou vu* was Ro Maya whose manifestation (*waqawaqa*) is human being, their *vu* (unknown) originated from Beqa i Colo, their totemic fish *saga*, the dog their totemic animal, and their war cry was “*na utu na mualevu*” (the canoe has landed). Shortly after they settled at Coladuki, the two brothers, Ro Drauniivilevu and Ro Yaya were respectively installed as Roko Tui Raviravi and Tui Tonobo (the pre-existing land chief’s title) for they came from a chiefly village in Rewa, confirming the Fijian myths telling a story of people of the land and powerful foreign chiefs that came to rule them from the sea.

After the installation, one group headed by Ratu Yaya remained at Raviravi village on the west side of the island, while the other group led by the Tui Raviravi moved to the north of Beqa to Nawaisomo a ring ditch settlement

¹⁸⁶ *Tikina ko Raviravi, Yavusa ko Raviravi* (records of the Native Land and Fisheries Commission, Suva), cited in Crosby 1988b.

occupied by people from Navitilevu (Ra province) to be closer to Rewa, whose coast could be easily seen from the village, “so the chiefs of Rewa would not be tired of sailing all the way to here” (Butucama, n.d., quoted and transl. by Crosby 1988b: 166). Successively, while the relationship between the two groups was reinforced by intermarriages, a new settlement, Rara Levu, was developed to accommodate both groups (Bigay et al. 1981: 40-1). While the old village was progressively simply referred to as *koro makawa* (old village), the new settlement borrowed the original name of Nawaisomo. From Peni Butucama’s account emerges that at one point it was agreed that their *yavusa* should seek a wife for the Roko Tui Raviravi (Ro Drauniivilevu) from Sawau. However, it turned out that they went to Rewa first (strategically more prominent) and the chiefs of Rewa gave them Ro Drauninui, from the Nukunitabua *yavusa* of Rewa, who eventually got married to Ro Balenaogo, the *vasu*¹⁸⁷ to Naivilaqata-Sawau, for he had the power over Raviravi the land at that time. Hypothetically, an alliance between Sawau and Raviravi was contemplated.

While mapping the bordering Sawau land with the help of Mika Tubanavau from Rukua and my student assistant Laisiasa Cavakiqali accompanied by Bulou Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga on January 26, 2005, we were able to recognize the old settlement covered by grass and high vegetation through the description furnished by Crosby. The interesting thing is that the original Sawau’s settlement, is just adjacent to the original Raviravi one. In the *Tukutuku*

¹⁸⁷ Traditionally a *vasu* (mother’s brother’s son) has the right to appropriate any moveable property belonging to his mother’s brother.

Raraba of the Sawau *yavusa*, told by Taitusi Tebetebe,¹⁸⁸ we learn that the *Kalou vu* of the Sawau *yavusa* is Matausi whose manifestation (*waqawaqa*) is a snake, their *vu* is Tui Naivilaqata, who originated from Koroinasau, their ancestral god Matausi who comes in the form of a snake, their totemic fish *bau*, the pig their totemic animal and their totemic plant *sea* or (*seya*). Their war cry “*sa kata na vuaka*” (the pig has bitten). Tui Naivilaqata, their ancestor, came from the district of Koroinasau (Davutukia, Navosa province, also referred to as Colo West in Colonial times),¹⁸⁹ probably from a settlement north of Balenabelo village today—indicated in some oral accounts as Saru. He founded a new place in Beqa and he named it Sawau.

A neimani Vu ko Tuinaivilaqata, e taka yani mai Koroinasau mai Colo West, ka mai tauyavutaka e dua na vanua mai Beqa, ka vakatoka me yacana ko Sawau. (Tebetebe 1927)

Only one time I heard an opposite story, seeing the chief bringing the title and the name of Sawau to Beqa.

*Ratou sa qai lako cake e delana, sa qai tukuni:
 “o iko lako mai vei”
 “au lako mai Nadroga.”
 “Nadroga mai vei.”
 “Mai Sawau”
 “Oi, sa vinaka mo sa buli mo Tui Sawau.”*

The people of the land came down from their hilltop and asked the Tui Sawau:

“Where are you from?”
 “I came from Nadroga.”
 “Where about in Nadroga?”
 “From Sawau” [he replied].

¹⁸⁸ *Tikina Ko Sawau, Yavusa ko Sawau Tukutuku Raraba*, Dakuibeqa, December 5, 1927 (records of the Native Land and Fisheries Commission, Suva).

¹⁸⁹ NLC Sheet LN9L/43; L/9,1.

“Good, then we shall install you as our chief, and we will call you Tui Sawau.” (Laveta pers. comm.)¹⁹⁰

To solve any doubt, on Jun 17, 2005, I met the topographic officer who realized the first 1:50.000 map of Beqa, Elaitia Caqinavanua—today NLTB Head Officer—he confirmed that there is no ‘Sawau’ district neither on Rewa, Nadroga, nor on the whole islands of Fiji. Thus, Caqinavanua believes that Tui Naivilaqata’s people gave the name Sawau to the piece of land they discovered and settled on Beqa’s west shoreline, and that when the ‘handsome chief’ Ratu arrived from the sea,¹⁹¹ he was given the title of Tui Sawau. This circumstance is also confirmed by the Roko Tui Rewa, Savenaca Kamikamica (pers. comm.¹⁹²).

While the Raviravi’s *Tukutuku Raraba* states that when their ancestors landed the “beach was empty”, neither the Sawau, nor the Raviravi’s accounts report of the presence of another tribe at the time of their landing on the island. However, from Wilkinson’s notes on the 1901 Native Land Commission Enquiries reviewed by Crosby (1988: 193)¹⁹³ and from my interviews, it appears commonly known that the Raviravi people were in Beqa before Tui Naivilaqata’s people, and thus are the original people of the land (*kai vanua*). What it is interesting is that the two chiefs lived for a period of time very close to each other, for the Sawau land and Coladuki are only 500m. apart, separated by a stream. Like it happened for the Raviravi people, a chief arrives from the sea,

¹⁹⁰ Interview May 21 2005 h. 17:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

¹⁹¹ All the oral accounts collected simply report Ratu.

¹⁹² Pers. comm. to Felix Colatanavanua, July 7, 2005, h. 13:30, Suva.

¹⁹³ Crosby refers to an “autochthonous nature” explicitly stated by the land *mataqali* Tonobo [Ra Qaliso, head of the Raviravi]: “We know of no legend or tradition of any land we sprang from originally ... I know of no *mataqali* or tribe with who we are of the same origin.” (Wilkinson n.d, quoted in Crosby 1988b: 193).

landing not far from Coladuki with his fisherman (*Daulevu*), on a beach flat named Nacurumoce, and becomes the head of the Sawau *yavusa*, (Tui Sawau).

Three different accounts of this event: Ratu Timocu Matanitobua's version (1926), Timoci Tebetebe's version (1927) and Manua Laveta's version (2005) are reproduced hereby.

Ratu Timoci Matanitobua, in his personal notes written in February 1926, retrieved and completed by his grand-daughter Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga,¹⁹⁴ refers about the arrival in Beqa of his ancestor Ratu from Rewa establishing the village settlement of his *yavusa* (*yavutu*):

Au taka mai Rewa. Au lako mai ka yaco sara mai ki Nacurumoce. Au sa mai tara koro sara kina me noqu yavutu. A kauti au mai ko Ratu, ka sa tubu me keimami lewe levu sara. Keimami sa qai mai wase vakalima ka sa yacai keimami na yavusa ko Sawau. Na keimami cavuti levu ko Nacurumoce.

I came from Rewa until I arrived at Nacurumoce. I built a village there as my *yavutu*. I was brought by Ratu, and we have grown in numbers. We were then divided into five groups and our *yavusa* was called Sawau. Our tribal name is Nacurumoce. (Ratu Timoci Matanitobua 1926)

Nevertheless, it appears that while the provenance of the Naivilaqata people is well established within the local oral historical record, an aura of mystery still surrounds the journey of the Tui Sawau to Beqa. Both the current Sawau's Daulevu (head of fishermen clan), Aseli Tabuavou (pers. comm.)¹⁹⁵, and Crosby's "composite account from many *italanoa* listened to over the kava bowl"

¹⁹⁴ I am largely indebted to Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga who on February 5, 1999 retrieved her grandfather's Ratu Timoci Matanitobua (1889 – 1946) genealogical notes, personally completed by himself on February 15, 1926. Successively she updated them and translated them in May 2005.

¹⁹⁵ Interview May. 21, 2005 h. 17:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

(Crosby 1988b: 190), indicate that the future Tui Sawau arrived with his Daulevu from a village around Viseisei between Lautoka and Nadi, called Saru (or Nasaru),¹⁹⁶ and not from Rewa, or Nadroga as Manua Laveta recalls. In my interview with Apenisa Kuruiwaca, an elder from Naceva village, *vasu* to the *mataqali* Naivilaqata and in the past *aid-de-camp* of the Tui Sawau, (firstly Ratu Aca Naborisi and successively Ratu Timoci Colatanavanua), Apenisa claimed that both the Daulevu and the Tui Sawau arrived instead from the Naitasiri province, just north of Rewa, from a village called Koronubunubu.¹⁹⁷

Not excluding the possibility that Ratu Timoci Matanitobua in his biographical notes opted for an ‘immaculate status’, boasting a lineage descending from Rewa chiefs, I don’t see any reason why he should have falsified his family tree. From his narrative is clearly emerging that some of his ancestors had Rewan descent. Reverend Calvert for example, on June 22, 1855, writes in his journal that “[the] Tui Sawou [sic], a Benga-ga [sic] chief whose mother was a Rawa [sic] lady¹⁹⁸ went to the Vunivalu and complained of some Benga-ga town where no food was prepared, and which did not live in peace with other parts of Benga-ga” (Calvert quoted in Birchall 1987: 443).

Ratu Timoci Matanitobua continues his account stating that his family’s *Kalou vu* is Masilaca, whose physical manifestation (*waqawaqa*) is the shark, his totemic fish is the turtle (*vonu*), the snake (*gata*) his totemic animal, and his totemic plant the *vudi vula*. Myth and reality merge elegantly in Ratu Timoci’s

¹⁹⁶ Curiously the same name of another village in Davutukia (Koroinasau) where the Naivilaqata people came from.

¹⁹⁷ Interview May 24 2005 h. 20:00 Naceva, Beqa.

¹⁹⁸ Calvert is probably referring to Bulou Nakuru who married Ratu Vakatonosau.

account, and his family's descent intertwines with the pantheon of Fijian gods. Like for many other islands in Fiji, it is believed that each major group, sometime just a band of brothers was brought in by quasi-deities, considered today the heroic leaders of the original settlers and thus the heroic ancestral leaders (*kalou-vu*) of the *mataqali* (see Sahlins 1962: 228). Ratu Timoci Matanitobua's ancestor, Ratu, grandchild of the shark god Masilaca, landed at Nacurumoce, the flat beach on the west side of Bewa. His parents were Ratu Sau (*vu*)¹⁹⁹ and Adi Niniwai, a woman from Rewa. Ratu Timoci Matanitobua's reconstruction of his genealogy is extremely accurate and brings some light into the intricacy of the oral histories concerning Sawau's formation, which as Crosby observes "are more complex than those of Raviravi" (Crosby 1988b: 171).

Ko Degei na vu levu mai Nakauvadra, na vu kei Viti. Sa vakawati ko Degei kei Adi Vono na marama ni Nakaseakula. E dua na luvedrau, ko Vukimalua.

Degei was the ancestral God of Fiji, in Nakauvadra. Degei married Adi Vono, a lady from Nakaseakula.²⁰⁰ They had a child called Vukimalua.

Sa vakawati ko Vukimalua ka watina ko Adi Timonia na yalewa ni Nakorowaiwai ka dua na luvedrau. Na yacana ko Kalinimolikula.

Vukimalua married Adi Timonia a lady from Nakorowaiwai. They had a child called Kalinimolikula.

Sa vakawati ko Kalinimolikula ka watina ko Naiwawa na yalewa ni Vugala. E walu na luvedrau:

Kalinimolikula married Naiwawa, a girl from Vugala. They had 8 children:

¹⁹⁹ According to Sahlins, *vu* is the ancestor proper, an person of more secular attributes often presumed to have been a son of the *kalou vu*.

²⁰⁰ Bavou lists several wives of Degei in his *History of the Beginning*: Adi Labanacagi, Sinukula, Nasau, Adi Sinu, Adi Lomaiwai, Adi Kasala, Adi Kula, Adi Mamaca, Adi Lolo, Naikolo, Adi Kamanalaqi (Kaplan 1995: 153).

1. Nasara
2. Nasese
3. Beleni
4. Suka ki Muri
5. Naisausau
6. Vatutu
7. Ruqua
8. Bulibulivanua

Ia, sa vakawati ko Nasara ka watina ko Nai na yalewa ni Waisai, ka sucu na luvedrau ka ratou lewe lima.

Nasara got married to Nai, a girl from Waisai, and they had 5 children:

1. Naticomalua
2. Ratu
3. Masilaca
4. Manu
5. Nasema

Ia, me sa qai tauri mai ko # 3 [sic] ka ni gone oqo ko Masilaca ka lako mai ki Beqa ka keitou vu mai kina.

The third child, Masilaca came to Beqa as our ancestral God.

E a vakawati ko Masilaca ka watina ko Adi na marama ni Nasilai ka dua bau ga na luvedrau. na yacana ko Ratu Sau.

Masilaca got married to Adi, a lady from Nasilai and they a child by the name of Ratu Sau.

Sa vakawati ko Ratu Sau ka watina ko Adi Niniwai na yalewa ni Rewa. E walu na luvedrau.

Ratu Sau married Adi Niniwai, a girl from Rewa. They had eight children:

1. Ratu
2. Goneca
3. Ucunivanua
4. Saunivalu
5. Manu
6. Ravai
7. Ceva
8. Mua

Ia, sa vakawati ko Ratu ka tauri Adi Buli na marama ni Kadavu ka lewe va na luvedrau.

Ratu married Adi Buli, a lady from Kadavu, and they had four children:

1. Ratu Ova
2. Rokomatu
3. Ratu Busa
4. Mata

Sa vakawati ko Ratu Ova ka watina ko Mere na yalewa Veivatuloa ka sucu na luvedrau ka dua ga. Na yacana ko Ratu Vakatonosau

Ratu Ova married Mere a girl from Veivatuloa and they had a child known as Ratu Vakatonosau.

Sa vakawati ko Ratu Vakatonosau ka tauri Bulou Nakuru na marama ni Rewa ka rua na luvedrau.

Ratu Vakatonosau married Bulou Nakuru, a lady from Rewa and they had two children:

1. Ratu Saumaimuri
2. Ratu Vukinavanua

Sa vakawati ko Ratu Saumaimuri ka tauri Niumai na marama ni Coladuki ka dua walega na luvedrau ka yacana ko Ratu Golea. Sa vakawati ko Ratu Golea ka watina ko Adi Vukivuki ko Beqa ka dua na luvedrau. Na yacana ko Kuruduadua ka vakawati ka watina ko Bulou Qolouvaki, na marama ni Yale, Kadavu.

Ratu Saumaimuri married Miumai, a lady from Coladuki and they had a child known as Ratu Golea. Ratu Golea married Adi Vukivuki of Beqa and they had a child known as Kuruduadua who married Bulou Qolouvaki, a girl from Yale, Kadavu.

Sa sucu na luvedrau ka ratou lewe tolu.

They had three children:

1. Ratu Drauniivilevu
2. Bulou Ratudradra
3. Ratu Verebunuia

Sa vakawati ko Ratu Drauniivilevu ka watina ko Bulou Valerau na marama ni ka sau, Kadavu, Nabukelevu. E a tolu na luvedrau

Ratu Drauniivilevu married Bulou Valerau, a lady from Kasau, Nabukelevu, Kadavu. They had three children:

1. Ratu Vari
2. Bulou Ratudradra
3. Adi Tuimatanisiga

Sa vakawati ko Ratu Vari ka watina ko Bulou Salote Vukivuki na marama ni Vunaniu ka tolu na luvedrau.

Ratu Vari married Bulou Salote Vukivuki, a lady from Vunaniu, and they had three children:

1. Ro Mereani Adi Tuimatanisiga
2. Ratu Peceli Vitauditoga
3. Ratu Drauniivilevu

(Matanitobua 1926, transcribed by Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga 1999-2005)²⁰¹

Ratu Timoci Matanitobua's account indicates the temporal precedence of genealogical accounts which allow the kin group (*yavusa*) to trace and "share its descent from the beginning of the world in the olden Days" (Jovesa Bavou 1917, quoted in Kaplan 1995: 151).

Taitusi Tebetebe account of the installation of Ratu as their *turaga-ni-yavusa* is deprived of details as most of the 'stereotyped' (Walter 1978: 365)

Tukutuku Raraba are showing:²⁰²

Era tiko kina ka dede, e ra sa qai veivosaki ka nau na kena itukutuku kina a veiyavusa kece vaka-Sawau me ra sa la'ki buli Ratu e dua na turaga mai Nacurumoce me liutaki ira ka ra vakatoka me yacana buli na Tui Sawau,

²⁰¹ While the narrative and the genealogical reconstruction of Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga continues till the present day, for the purpose of this section I reproduced it limiting it to Ratu Timoci Matanitobua's father, Ratu Timoci Veitaukitoga. For a complete succession, see Appendix E.

²⁰² As one of the elders from Dakuni one time told me: the "*Turaga ni Veitarogi Vanua* (NLC officers) were saying '*vakasolokakana e dua mai dakuna*' you write like this, you write like this, you write like this..." (Sekonaia 'Jeke' Talebula, pers. comm. Dakuni Mar. 12, 2005, h.14:00)

sai koya ogo nai matai ni Tui Sawau ka buli taumada, e ra sa mani vakarorogo tiko yani vua vakavanua na neimani qase kei ira na veiyavusa vaka-Sawau.

For some time, while at Sawau, the elders sat together and discussed and sent their decision and propositions to all yavusa that belong to the vanua o Sawau to install Ratu, a chief at Nacurumoce, as their traditional leader bestowing him with the title of Tui Sawau. He was the first Tui Sawau to be installed, hence, all elders, tribes and people of the vanua of Sawau listened to him as their head. (Taitusi Tebetebe 1927)

Manua Laveta's more recent account, while it assumes the Tui Sawau's provenance from Nadroga, adds corpus to the narrative creating a colorful picture of the scene of the arrival of Ratu at Nacurumoce.

Nacurumoce, io yaco mai na Tui Sawau, koya Nacurumoce vata kei Daulevu, o rau, rau turaga ruarua, yaco mai rau yaco mai Naicurumoce, rau yaco mai keya sa bogi rau curu ga mai rau moce, mataka lailai, a ratou rai mai o ratou na mai Natokalau mai Vunidawa e ratou tiko mai cake, ratou raica sa, sa sigani tu na laca mai wai. Ratou qai lako o ratou qai lai raica, ratou tukuna ni sa tawa sara ga na matavura baleta ni dua na turaga rairai vinaka e tu mai kina. Sa qai tukuni "dou lako, dou lai tama kina o koya ga e sauma mai o koya e turaga." Ratou sa qai lako yani ratou tama "du...o...o..." ya sa mani tukuna o Daulevu vei "Tui Sawau sauva na tama" tama, sa qai tama o koya, sauva o Tui Sawau, raotu sa qai tukuna o ratou na turaga, ratou liu mai o Natolakau vata kei Vunidawa, o ratou qo "meda sa mai lako mo ni sa mai buli mo ni tui."

When the Tui Sawau and the Daulevu, the head of the fishermen clan, landed at Nacurumoce, they were both representing chiefly families. They arrived at Nacurumoce at night, put the sails down and went to sleep, that's what Nacurumoce means. The next morning, the people from the Natokalou²⁰³ and Vunidawa²⁰⁴ clans, who were living higher up from the shore, looked inquisitively at those sails placed to dry on their shore. They then went down to enquire, and found a handsome chief-like man standing there on the shore. They immediately went forth performing the traditional *tama*, shouts and acclamations in respect of the chiefs, reserved only to

²⁰³ Natokalou is currently the *itokatoka* of the *mataqali* Naivilaqata (*bete* / priestly clan), but it also combined to the *mataqali* Naqara (*matanivanua* / spokesmen clan).

²⁰⁴ Vunidawa, formerly the chief's grave-diggers (*bouta*) entitled to touch the chief's body, is currently combined to the *mataqali* Naqara (*matanivanua* / spokesmen clan).

them, knowing that the one responding would be the chief. As they came closer, they performed the *tama*, “*du...o...o!*” The Tui Sawau and the Daulevu heard it, and the Daulevu told the Tui Sawau: “Let them come, we shall install you as our chief.”
(Manua Laveta 2005²⁰⁵)

A connection to Nadroga, could be found in another *italanoa*. Not long after the settlement at Nacurumoce, a member of the chiefly *mataqali* had a dispute over their totemic food *vudi vula* or *saiwula* (sweet bananas). As it consequence, he left Beqa for Nayawa, Nadroga, near Sigatoka, where his descendents still live.²⁰⁶

At the time of Ratu Drauniivilevu (Tui Sawau), approximately the second decade of the 19th century, Rewa had reached the zenith of her power, her territories had been extended along the south coast of Viti Levu, as far as Nadroga. Beqa Island had been conquered and the northern end of Kadavu controlled (Derrick 2001[1946]: 56, 63). Derrick also informs us of an incident not particularly ‘unusual’ for those times, but that it reflected on Beqa’s life and social organization with severe consequences. In 1839 some Beqan people had killed and eaten the crews of several Rewa canoes wrecked on their island (Derrick 2001: 27). This incident is also reported by several people traveling through the Fijian islands in those years.

Extremely accurate is Reverend Cargill’s account. From his mission in Rewa he had an optimal point of observation of the aftermath of this incident and its consequent retaliation machinated by the Rewa chiefs. Two annotations on his diary, on November 5

²⁰⁵ Interview May 21 2005 h. 17:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

²⁰⁶ The Tui Nayawa (holding the title of Tui Madudu), a descendent of the Sawau chiefly family, is currently the mayor of Sigatoka town. In the rare case of extinction of the Sawau chiefly family in Beqa, his lineage would provide additional descent.

and 14, 1839 summarize the battle:

This morning the king and most of the men belonging to Rewa sailed to Bengga to wage war on the inhabitants of one settlement in that isld. on act of their insubordination to the Rewa chiefs, and because of their having murdered and eaten the crews of several canoes wh. were wrecked on their shores. This war has been contemplated for a length of time, and the people of Bengga have been preparing to resist any attack wh. may made upon them. Their settlement stands on the summit of a rock [Vagadra] and is very difficult of access. The Rewa people have sailed in very high spirits, and assure themselves of a complete triumph over their enemies.

This afternoon the fleet of canoes wh. sailed to Bengga returned to Rewa, bringing back the king [Tui Sawau] and his warriors. They returned in triumph, shouting a song of victory and having white pieces of native cloth fastened to the ends of spears as substitutes for flags. One of their number was killed by a musket ball. Many others were wounded with arrows and some with stones thrown by means of slings. Three of the Bengga people were killed. They surrendered to the Rewa chiefs and presented them with 2 women, 4 whales' teeth, 10 mats and 1 basket of earth as evidence of their submission and as the price of pardon. The Rewa people gladly concluded a treaty of peace, and speedily returned to celebrate at home their feats of heroism. (Cargill 1839: II; Cargill 1977, quoted in Schütz 1977: 160)

Furthermore, Crosby (1988b) reproduces also Reverend Jaggar's account of the defeat of Vagadra's hilltop fortification:

This morn: the *lali* [drum] beaten for war with Beqa ... they are still beating up the war-drum –the other side of the water-Phillips [Cokanauto] has been gathering men and canoes for't purpose of fighting. [He] is now at Beqa –two *koros* [villages] have *soro*'d [submitted] to him (bringing earth in their hands that their lives might be spared) and given him their land –a third w'd not, with them he is fight'g ... [difficult] isl'd to conquer –stands on a rock – few men can defend it. (Jaggar 1839-40: 123-24, quoted in Crosby 1988b: 139-40)²⁰⁷

Six months later, on May 20th, while the Roko Tui Dreketi of Rewa was approving the treaty regulating the treatment for visiting foreign vessels negotiated by Commodore Charles Wilkes of the United States Exploring Expedition, Wilkes' flotilla,

²⁰⁷ The comments in square brackets are added by Crosby (1988b).

with the sloops-of-war *Vincennes* (flagship of Commodore Wilkes) and *Peacock*, the brig *Porpoise*, and the tender *Flying Fish*²⁰⁸, was reaching Beqa. On board Wilkes had a staff of scientists, including zoologists and geologists, botanists, artists and philologists that for three months would be making surveys and preparing a new chart of the Fiji Islands (Derrick 2001: 91). Night time they entered the reef surrounding the island of Beqa through a narrow passage, and anchored off a deep harbor. The next morning, Wilkes' observes that:

The natives were very civil, and laid aside their arms at some distance from the party, before they approached; they brought bread-fruit, yams, andc., to trade... The island of Mbenga [sic] has suffered severely of late years from the tyrannical power of the Rewa chiefs, and is now *ygali* to Rewa. Formerly, its inhabitants had a high idea of their importance, styling themselves "*Yagali dura ki langi* [sic]" –subject to heaven alone; but of late years, in consequence of their having offended the king of Rewa, he sent a force which finally overcame them, and butchered nearly all the inhabitants. Ngaraningiou [sic] is said to have been the bloody executioner of this act.²⁰⁹ Since that time these descendents of the gods, according to their mythology, have lost their political influence. (Wilkes 1845: 207)

Towards 1850, power and influence in Fiji started beginning to centre on the chiefdoms of Bau, Rewa, Somosomo, Verata, Naitasiri, Macuata, Bua and Lakeba. Of these Bau was undoubtedly the most powerful. On the basis of Wilkes' account France observes that Bau had never claimed any authority over the island of Beqa "which, by

²⁰⁸ A fifth ship, the *Relief*, was sent home via Hawaii. The *Paacock* wrecked on July 18th, 1941 while attempting to cross the bar and enter the Columbia River on Wilkes' orders.

²⁰⁹ Qaraniqio, king of Rewa, son of Banuve ('Kania', Tui Dreketi) butchered by Cakobau in 1846, was also known as Dakuwaqa, nicknamed for his tall stature 'the long fellow' (*lagivala*). Derrick confirms that with his brother Cokanautu ('Phillips') they caused the death of many hundreds of their people "in a long struggle in which, as the fortunes of war fluctuated, they occupied in turn the position of king of Rewa." (Derrick 2001: 57). While Cokanautu drunk himself to death at the age of forty—as described in the previous chapter—Qaraniqio died suddenly when he was within striking distance of his archenemy, Cakobau. Derrick observes that the tale of the disintegration of that family is the tale of the downfall of Rewa (Derrick *ibid.*).

tradition, was subservient to no earthly power, being the only place left untouched by the great flood which destroyed the rest of the world.²¹⁰ It had been conquered, however, by Rewa in 1839 and since that time acknowledged its subjection to the Roko Tui Dreketi, the high chief of Rewa” (France 1969: 82; Wilkes 1845: 82-3). Bulou Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga explained to me that when the *masi* of the Tui Sawau was returned to Beqa, the Roko Tui Dreketi and her great grandfather Ratu Peceli Vitaukitoga agreed that in commemoration the Tui Dreketi’s surname changed to Tuisawau (one word). Until today all of Tui Dreketi’s descendants maintain the Tuisawau surname (Tuimatanisiga pers. comm.)²¹¹

In the *Records of the Cakobau Government and the Provisional Government*, we read that Bau chiefs had “extended their influence by means of warfare, intrigue, and judicious alliances over nearly one-third of the Group. By 1850, Ratu Cakobau, the ambitious Vunivalu of Bau²¹², had achieved a position near paramountcy that foreigners had begun to address him as Tui Viti (King of Fiji).”²¹³ Cakobau began to find his supremacy threatened after 1855 by the rise to power of Tongan chief Ma’afu.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ See Chapter 2.

²¹¹ Email July 13, 2005.

²¹² The title of Vunivalu of Bau, the Paramount Chief of the Kubuna Confederacy, is still generally considered to be the highest chiefly title in Fiji. The title which means *Warlord of Bau* and once held by Seru Epenisa Cakobau is not strictly hereditary, but belongs to the Tui Kaba clan, based on Bau Island.

²¹³ “Introduction”, *Records of the Cakobau Government and the Provisional Government* June 1871 – September 1875, Preliminary Inventory No.1 prepared by S. Tuinaceva [CD2775 F5 A25 V.1], Fiji National Archives, Suva.

²¹⁴ Between 1848 and 1853, Ma’afu (Ma’afuotu’itoga), a prince of Royal Blood of Tonga was controlling the Lau Group and shortly became challenging the supremacy of Cakobau himself. By the 1860s he had come near to making Fiji a dependency of the Tongan crown (Derrick 2001: 75). He established himself in Lakeba as the leader of the Tongan community in Fiji. The Tui Nayau, who controlled the Lau Islands was at that time an old man, severely afflicted by elephantiasis (see Wilkes 1845). Ma’afu became the military representative of the Tui Nayau and on the name of Christianity extended his authority to the nearby Moala Group. In 1869 he assumed the title of Tui Lau, severing his connection with the Tongan Government (France 1969:

Cakobau, who had defeated Rewa in battle was claiming Beqa as his own. However, after aiding Cakobau in the campaign against the chiefs of Rewa and their allies, Ma'afu started extending his influence from Lau to other parts of the group. Ma'afu eventually defeated Cakobau in a campaign on the Makuata coast and then occupied Beqa taking by surprise the chiefs in 1860 (Bigay et al. 1981: 46). By 1865 Ma'afu controlled the island of Beqa and large parts of the western coasts of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu (France 1969: 82). Crosby observes that Ma'afu was cleverly fostering Wesleyan missions run by Tongan preachers, thus through a *tauvu* relationship between Lau and Beqa he had been able to establish a mission in the Raviravi *vanua* at Nawaisomo, and was regularly visiting Beqa and gaining food and kava from there (Crosby 1988b; Derrick 2001).

France observes that Cakobau's assumption of the dignity of and title of 'King' was leading him in serious difficulties. On May 23rd 1868, he accepted the invitation to a champagne breakfast on board the *Albion* in Levuka's harbor, the first charter of the Polynesian Company, to clarify the obligations accruing to that title (France 1969: 81). In fact, in 1855 the United States Government had brought indemnity claims against Cakobau for damage and loss of property sustained by American citizens by the hands of the Fijians. Although Cakobau himself had nothing to do with the incidents on which the claims were based, the United States Government insisted that as 'King of Fiji', he was responsible for the actions of his subjects.²¹⁵ The claims amounted in the end to over

83-4).

²¹⁵ Among other incidents, the burning of the house of the United States' representative in Fiji, J.B. Wilson, on Nukulau Island in February 1855 by the Rewa people; the murder in 1850 of Nathan Foster; the murder of two American crew members of the *Zotoff*, engaged in collecting *bêche-de-mer* at Naivu on Gevo Island in September 1845 (Derrick 2001), possibly the same murder Mrs. Mary Wallis reports in her diary, although she claims the number of men killed was four (Wallis 1982[1851]: 124-5); the crimes committed by Qaraniqio's (king of Rewa) half-brother Veidovi on September 5, 1834, which caused the death of eight American crew members

45,000 dollars, a sum which Cakobau could not hope to raise by himself.

In October 1858 the *U.S.S. Vandalia* set anchor in Levuka and Cakobau signed a promise to pay the American Claims. In the meantime events in America were moving to a crisis,²¹⁶ and no ship could be spared. However, in July 1867 Cakobau had no other choice but to sign a new agreement before Captain Stanley of the *U.S.S. Tuscarora*, who was threatening to bombard Levuka town. Cakobau promised to pay the claims in four yearly installments, making the first payment in May 1868 and pledged as security the islands of Nairai, Batiki and Moturiki (Derrick 2001: 177). On board of the *Albion*, Cakobau met the representatives of a group of Australian businessmen who had formed a company through the U.S. Consul in Melbourne with the object of settling the American debt in return for a grant of 200,000 acres of land together with trading privileges in Fiji, and a small annuity to Cakobau (France 1969: 81, Bigay et al. 1981: 47). The first installment of the American debt was due in few days, thus the businessmen had no difficulty in persuading Cakobau that they had the solution to all his problems.

The first charter Cakobau signed that day transferred to the Polynesia Company 200,000 acres of land “including Suva Harbour, both banks of the Navua River and running back to the large Rewa River, that is, all lands within the boundary not already sold, the remainder to be mutually arranged” (Attorney General J.H. de Ricci quoted in France *ibid.*). The grants were made in perpetuity and he personally undertook to protect the Polynesia Company’s settlers from molestation in their occupation. The blocks which he included in the second installment were: the whole of Beqa, and adjoining islets which

of the *Charles Doggett* in Kadavu, which culminated with his arrest to the United States on the warship *Peacock* six years after, on May 22, 1840.

²¹⁶ In December 1860 South Carolina and six other Southern States seceded and formed a provisional government leading to the American civil war.

totaled 10,000 acres; a block four miles square in Nateva Bay; a block of 50,000 acres at Viti Levu Bay; and a block of 27,000 acres at Suva. (France 1969: 82; Bigay et al. 1981: 47).

However, from a letter from Cakobau to Ma'afu three months later emerges the uncertainty of the destiny of the island of Beqa:

25th August, 1868

To Enere Ma'afu,

I, the Vunivalu, write to you about the land of Beqa which I have given to the Europeans as payment by the people of Rewa. We have all given land payment of our debt. After I have given Beqa the Rewa people said it is your property. I now write to say that if Beqa is really yours, give it to me so that I may give it to the Europeans. I send you my regards.

I am, etc.,

(SGD.) RATU EPENISA CAKOBAU²¹⁷

More interesting is the reply from Beqa. France reports that "when the chief of the island [Beqa] heard of the sale to the Polynesia Company, he wrote Ma'afu and asked for protection, offering him a share in the government of the island (France 1969: 82). This circumstance is inferable from the letter to the American Consul sent by Emosi Tui Beqa:

16th November, 1868

To the Consul

Sir, I write you, Consul, with regard to my land Beqa as I have heard that the Vunivalu of Bau has given it away as a payment of some trouble which he had with you American Chiefs.

I am very distressed about the matter because it was done without my knowledge nor was I present.

I do not wish my land given away.

I still have it. I do not know what I have done to be robbed of my land.

Such is my desire which I want you to know, Consul.

²¹⁷ Correspondence held in H.M.B.C. Files, National Archives, Suva (F I/Misc. 48, C.M.S. cited in Crosby 1988b: 142).

There is only one thing I know, that is that I have told Maaфу a Tongan Chief to be my friend and to be my partner in my land so that we could work together for the benefit of the Church.

This is my desire which I now communicate to you.

Let whatever is just be done.

I am, etc.,

EMOSI TUI BEQA [Ratu Emosi Drauniivilevu, Tui Raviravi]²¹⁸

For the purpose of this section, to conclude this ‘saga’ it is worth saying that Ma‘afu refused Cakobau’s proposition, Beqa was never alienated (France 1969: 82), and the ambitious plans of the Polynesia Company miserably failed (Bigay et al. 1981: 47). However, through this correspondence emerges that in 1868 a chief on Beqa was self-styling the title of ‘Tui Beqa’. Crosby, who reproduced such interesting correspondence in his M.A. Thesis, confirms my findings that in Beqa there is no ‘Tui Beqa’ title, nor anybody remember there ever having been one (Crosby 1988b: 143). Nevertheless, Crosby refers about a statement pronounced by Ratu Emosi Drauniivilevu’s son, Ratu Josua Toroca during the Polynesian Company a hearings a decade later in 1878:

The Fijians are the owners of Beqa –not the Melbourne people. I am the owner of the whole of Beqa absolutely white man’s fashion. It is ours together –my tribe and myself...

...I was at Beqa when the Vunivalu [Warlord of Rewa] went there with the Melbourne people [Polynesian Company]. They came in white men’s boats and Fijian canoes.

The landed –and sent for my father for them to come –and when they were collected together, they discussed the question of Beqa lands –and the *Vunivalu* told them to sign a deed giving the Island to the people [Polynesian Company].

The Beqa chiefs were silent –and were unwilling to touch the pen. They refused to give their land.

The *Vunivalu* insisted on their signing the pen [sic] and they persisted in refusing.

After remaining a while the Beqa chiefs left the house and fled to the different villages as they refused to give up the land. I was not present – was in another house when the meeting was held...

²¹⁸ Ibid.

...My father's name was Amose Tui Sawau – Hosea Fari and Caesar Tui Rukua were the two chiefs who were with him. (Ratu Josua Toroca 1878)²¹⁹

Crosby observes that the Tui Raviravi, had self-styled himself 'Tui Beqa', for he was the chiefly figurehead for the island's dealings with Cakobau and claimed the respect of the other chiefs on Beqa. However, while he had claimed the island of Beqa as his own, he did not have the 'power of attorney' to dispose of the total island landholdings (Crosby 1988b: 144). However, from the accounts reviewed, the Tui Raviravi had a cogent political and religious power compared to the Tui Sawau, the 'chief at Nacurumoce' who came from the sea later. After all, it was the Tui Raviravi who 'represented' Beqa during the delicate affair with the Polynesia Company and it was his village at Nawaisomo that received the first Tongan missionaries. Because his agency, which I would call an 'agency of necessity', it is understandable that he was regarded as the 'Chief of Beqa', alias 'Tui Beqa'.

In addition, the Tui Raviravi historically had a *vasu* to Sawau, through Ratu Baleanogo's marriage to a Sawau woman. However, what appears less clear is how the Tui Raviravi (Ratu Emosi Drauniivilevu) had also adopted at one point the name 'Tui Sawau', as stated by his son Ratu Jousua Toroca (Crosby 1988b: 143). What creates confusion, inducing in a misinterpretation of the historical record, is that the name Drauniivilevu is in fact shared by both the Sawau and Raviravi *yavusa* (Ratu Timoci Matanitobua 1926; Taitusi Tebetebe 1927; Peni Butucama n.d.).

²¹⁹ Records of the Land Claims Commission #367, Fiji National Archives, Suva, cited in Crosby 1988b: 143.

In my reconstruction of Sawau's recent history juxtaposing Ratu Timoci Matanitobua's personal notes (1926) retrieved in February 1999 by his granddaughter Bulou Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga, to Taitusi Tebetebe's *Tukutu Raraba* (1927), her namesake ancestor Adi Tuimatanisiga, after the murder of her father Ratu Drauniivilevu (Tui Sawau) by hand of his brother Ratu Tabaiwalu, was taken to Nabukelevu on Kadavu Island and brought up over there with her brother Ratu Vari.

Sa mate ko Ratu Golea ka sa bula na luvena ko Ratu Kuruduadua. E sega talega ni yaco e dua na ka e na nona gauna na turaga ogo. Sa mate ko Kuruduadua ka sa bula na luvena ko Ratu Drauniivilevu. Sa labati na turaga ogo. Sa labata ga e dua na tacina, na yacana ko Ratu Tabaiwalu. E na gauna e a sa labati kina ko Ratu Drauniivilevu, e rau bula tu kina e rua na luvena, ko Ratu Vari kei Adi Tuimatanisiga. Sa mani kauti rau ko tinadrau ki Nabukelevu, Kadavu me rau lako ki susugi kina.

Sa mani mai veiliutaki kina ko Ratu Tabaiwalu vei ira na kai Sawau. Ni sa mate ko Ratu Tabaiwalu, e ra sa qai lakovi Ratu Vari yani vakavanua ki Nabukelevu ko ira na kai Sawau. Ia, ni sa yaco mai, e ra sa mai buli koya e na Masi ni Vanua, Tui Sawau ka sa buli vata kei ira na veitui ni koro e na yavusa vaka Sawau me yacova sara na 'Tunidau, Daulevu'. Keitou sa mai solia kina vei iratou na gonedau na nodratou yavutu, na nodratou mataqali koVale i lawa, na nodratou itokatoka ko Valeilawa kei na itokatoka ko Koronuqanuqa. Sa mai soli talega kina vei iratou na nodratou tiki ni vanua E a mai buli talega kina na Tui Rukua e na mataqali matanivanua, na yacana na 'Tui Nadoya'.

When Ratu Golea died he was survived by his son Ratu Kuruduadua. Nothing happened during his time. Ratu Kuruduadua died and was survived by Ratu Drauniivilevu. He was murdered. He was murdered by his brother Ratu Tabaiwalu. At the time of his murder, two of his children were alive namely Ratu Vari and Adi Tuimatanisiga. They were taken by their mother to Nabukelevu, Kadavu where they were brought up.

Ratu Tabaiwalu then became the head of the Sawau people. When Ratu Tabaiwalu died, Sawau people traditionally approached Ratu Vari in Nabukelevu. When he arrived he was installed as the Tui Sawau by the traditional installers of chiefs. Simultaneously, chiefs within the different villages that make up the yavusa Sawau, even the 'Tunidau, Daulevu' [head of the *gonedau* fishermen clan] were installed. This was when we

traditionally gave the *gonedau* their own *yavutu*; their *mataqali* was known as Valeilawa, their *itokatoka* was known as Valeilawa and Koronuqanuqa. They were also given a piece of land. The Tui Rukua was also installed as the *matanivanua* clan and was traditionally called the ‘Tui Nadoya’. (Ratu Timoci Matanitobua 1926)

Ko ira nai wuse ogo, keimami sega ni cokovata tale ka yacova ni vakarewa na koila. Ni ra sa tiko mai Navakaisese na neimami qase, ka ra tiko mai Vaga na turaga ni Nacurumoce, ka donuya ni tubu e dua na nodratou veisei na turaga ni Nacurumoce, e ra mani rogoca na neimami qase, e ra qai lavoki Ratu Drauniivilevu ka Tui Sawau tiko e na gauna ko ya me mai tiko vei ira mai Navakaisese. Ni sa mai tiko vei ira mai Navakaisese qai labati koya ko Ratu Tabaiwalu na turaga ni Nacurumoce. Ni sa mate ko Ratu Drauniivilevu na Tui Sawau, sa rogo yani yani na kena itukutuku vei ira na turaga ni Nasau mai Nabukelevu, Kadavu, e ra sa mani lavoki rau mai na luvena ko Ratu Vari kei Bulou Tuimatanisiga me rau la tiko vei ira. Ni sa labati oti ko Ratu Drauniivilevu, sa mai taura ti na vanua ogo ko Sawau ko Ratu Tabaiwalu na turaga ni Nacurumoce ka tiko mai Vaga. Ni sa mate ko Ratu Tabaiwalu, e ra sa qai veivosaki tale na neimami qase kei ira kece na veiyavusa vaka-Sawau me rau sa lavoki na luveni Ratu Drauniivilevu vei ira na turaga ni Nasau mai Nabukelevu. Ni rau sa yaco ma ki Navakaisese, e ra sa qai veivosaki na neimami qase me ra sa biuti Navakaisese me ra mai cokotaka e dua na vanua e voleka ki baravi, ka ra vakatoka me yacana ko Dakuibeqa.

We were never unified with the portion that left until Cession. While we were still at Navakaisese, and our chief (Nacurumoce) resided at Vaga, a conflict arose between elders of Nacurumoce resulting in our elders going to Nacurumoce to retrieve the Tui Sawau Ratu Drauniivilevu and take him back to Navakaisese. While at Navakaisese, he was murdered by Ratu Tabaiwalu, a chief from Nacurumoce [Ratu Drauniivilevu’s brother]. When Ratu Drauniivilevu died, those from Nasau, Nabukelevu, Kadavu heard what had happened and men from Nasau came to Navakaisese to take his two children, Ratu Vari and Bulou Tuimatanisiga to stay with them. Ratu Tabaiwalu, from Nacurumoce, looked after the vanua of Sawau, from Vaga. When Ratu Tabaiwalu died, elders decided that they should approach Ratu Drauniivilevu's children at Nasau, Nabukelevu, and bring them back home. When the two children arrived at Navakaisese, the elders again that the village shifts to a place close to the shore, hence, resulting in their moving and setting up a new village at what is now called Dakuibeqa. (Taitusi Tebetebe 1927)

Successively, Ratu Vari’s daughter, Ro Mereani Adi Tuimatanisiga, was traditionally approached from Tavuki, Kadavu, to marry the Tui Tavuki. They had

two children. When the Tui Tavuki passed away, the Sawau *yavusa* brought her back to Beqa and the Raviravi people approached her to marry the Tui Raviravi. They had two children. However, despite the intermarriages between the Sawau and the Raviravi people, the alliance between the Tui Sawau's sister and the Tui Raviravi apparently did not unite the two *yavusa*, neither reinforced the island of Beqa.

Sa qai yaco na i valu e na nona gauna ko Ratu Vari. E ra sa mani mai kauti Tui Sawau kei ira na nona gonedaui ko ira na kai Sawau ki Vagadra, ka me ra lako ki maroroi kina. E ra sa kabati keimami kina na kai Raviravi ka ra mani sega ni rawai kina. Na vuna na i valu ni via kovea na masi ni Tui Sawau ko Tui Raviravi.

A war happened during Ratu Vari's era. The Tui Sawau and his *gonedaui* [fisherman] were taken to Vagadra where they were kept and protected. The Raviravi people tried to conquer us [Sawau] but did not succeed. The reason behind the war was that the Tui Raviravi wanted the Tui Sawau title. (Ratu Timoci Matanitobua, 1926)

Vagadra, the high inland hill fortification described above is located behind Dakuni village and characterized by vertical steep slopes resembling a man made wall. With a narrow entranceway allowing a single way up to its pinnacle the fortress is quite inaccessible. On the other hand, it offers a strategic dominant position allowing a magnificent vision of Beqa's east side. Taitusi Tebetebe's 1927 account of the installation of Ratu Vari as the Tui Sawau, conserved in the *Tukutuku Raraba*, and Sekonaia 'Jeke' Talebula's more recent account, suggest that at the time of Ratu Vari (Tui Sawau) the Sawau *yavusa* was split, with internal disputes and fights, moving from one secure location to the other, often under attack. Cited locations in the accounts are Vaga, a coastal flatland defended site with single unit ring-ditch (Crosby 1988b), Navakaisese, a

high inland hill fortification, located almost in the heart of the island, Korokobua, a high inland fortification located north east, and the hilltop fortification of Vagadra.

Ni ra sa tiko mai Dakuibeqa ka dede qai tube tabua tale ko Ratu Vari na turaga ni Nacurumoce ka tiko vata kei ira na neimani qase, vei ira na turaga ni Naduruvesi me ra mai kabai na neimani qase. A vuni nodra kabai na neimani qase ni yaloca ko Ratu Vari e vukui na luvena ni a karaci koya tale e dua na neimani qase. Ni sa cibi nai valu ka kabai ko ira na neimani qase mai Dakuibeqa ka vua ka ra mani se kina ki Navakaisese. Ni ra sa tiko mai Navakaisese, e ra sa qai veivosaki na neimani qase me ra sa la'ki soro vei Ratu Vari ki Vaga me sautu na nodrai tikotiko. Ni sa sautu na nodrai tikotiko, e ra qai lakovi Ratu Vari ki Vaga. Ni sa mai tiko vei ira ko Ratu Vari sa qai lewa me ra biuti Navakaisese ki Vagadra ka tiko vata kei ira na turaga ni Vagadra. E ra tiko mai Vagadra ka dede e ra qai biuti Vagadra ki Dakuni. Ni ra sa tiko mai Dakuni, e ra sa qai veisosaki na veiyavusa vaka-Sawau me ra sa buli Ratu Vari me nodrai liuliu levu vakavanua ka yacana buli na Tui Sawau. E na gauna ka Tui Sawau tiko kina ko Ratu Vari, qai rogo mai ni sa vakacibi i valu tiko ko Ratu Sisa Tuicaku na Tui Rukua me ra kabai na neimani qase, sa mani itukutuku yani ko Ratu Vari ki na veiyavusa vaka-Sawau, Nacurumoce kei Vagadra me ra sa la'ki viri Vagadra me na nodra koro ni valu.

While at Dakuibeqa, Ratu Vari took a *tabua* to the men of Duruvesi [chiefly *mataqali* of Rukua] so that they can come and fight our elders/men. The reason for rallying them was that Ratu Vari was angry for how one of elders scolded his child. When the battle was over and our elders have been defeated, they then fled to Navakaisese. While at Navakaisese, the elders decided to visit Ratu Vari at Vaga and present their *isoro* [formal apology] to him so that there will be peace in their land. When everything was back to normal and peace had prevailed in their village, they then returned to Vaga to bring back Ratu Vari. When Ratu Vari returned, he ordered that they move from Navakaisese to Vagadra, to stay with the clan of Vagadra. After a while at Vagadra, they then moved to Dakuni. While at Dakuni, all tribes belonging to Sawau decided that they install Ratu Vari as their traditional head bestowing him the title of Tui Sawau. When Ratu Vari was Tui Sawau, Ratu Sisa Tuicaku, the chief of Rukua called for a battle, hence, Ratu Vari called on all Sawau people including Nacurumoce and Vagadra to retreat to Vagadra and make it their fortress. (Taitusi Tebetebe 1927)

In his account, Sekonaia 'Jeke' Talebula add more details in relation to the

custodians of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony:

Na vilavilairevo, e na ka au rogoca mai vei ratou na qase, ni a dua vata ga ai na matavuvale, ena lakolako mai i Dakuibeqa, vata kei na ilakolako e tiko yani e loma ni Dakuni, yacova mai qo keitou cakava ai na yatu ia mai tawase na ilakolako, gauna sa yaco kina e dua na leqa. Nodrau sa mai veivaluti tale na Tui Sawau vaka veitacini. Ia na qai mai yaco na leqa oya, na, matavuvale qo sa tekivuna rawa tiko mai na vila. Na matai ni vila sa vakayacora vaka tikina, na gauna sa lako mai kina sa mani yaco e dua na veitawasei. Ratou sa mani gole mai e dua na mata lakolako, o ratou na mataqali o Buto, lako tale tiko ga mai e dua vei ratou na gone mai Valelawa. E vica tale ga na matavuvale keitou lako vata, mai, me yacova mai qo sa mai vo wale ga, keitou na lewe tolu. Keitou mai vakaitikotiko yani i Korokobua, toso sobu sara mai ra, mai tiko e Ucukaca, mani keitou tiko kina, ratou sa qai kere veivuke yani o ratou e Vagadra. Ratou kere veivuke e Vagadra, me keitou lai maroroya na itikotiko ni valu e Vagadra ni sa Kaba tiko mai na meca, kaba mai na valu nei Teve mai Serua, keitou maroroya rawa.

Firewalking, as I can remember from the tales of my village elders, comes from a single lineage in the village of Dakuibeqa, which split here in Dakuni. There used to be a single united tribe, until there was a divergence, and a conflict arose within the extended family. Members of the Tui Sawau chiefly family started fighting against each other. Before such incident, firewalking was already practiced by the tribe. Firewalking was initially performed by the members of that tribe, communally. However, this changed when the break-up occurred. One portion of the tribe, the Buto clan, left, accompanied by a member of the Valeilawa [gonedau] family. We came with other families, and until now, only three members of our clan are left. We initially stayed at Korokobua, before moving to Ucukaca. While at Ucukaca, the village fortification of Vagadra requested our assistance in order to protect their fortress from their enemy, Teve from Serua, who was about to attack them. (Talebula pers. comm.)²²⁰

After the installation of Ratu Vari as the Tui Sawau the Sawau people and the chiefs from Nacurumoce are reunited for the first time since they divided after his ancestor Ratu's landing and installation at Nacurumoce four generations before. The Tui Sawau (Ratu Vari) was not known to be a blood-driven warlord (Vunivalu). However, he was causing and instigating tense relationships and battles throughout the island of Beqa.

²²⁰ Interview Mar. 12 2005 h.14:00, Dakuni, Beqa.

While defending Vagadra from the Raviravi attacks coming from the north of the island, the Sawau people were fighting the Rukua people on the west. Following Crosby's account (1988) and Mika Tubanavau's personal notes, it appears that they never established strong alliances with Rukua village, which often rebelled against the Tui Sawau's authority.

The Rukua people, originally from Serua, landed on Beqa and settled at Duruvesi, on the same beach flat coast occupied by the chiefs at Nacucumoce (Sawau) and the chiefs at Coladuki (Raviravi). When a dispute over women caused by the Tui Rukua arises, the group split. The people fled for three different settlements: some of them followed war chief Tui Rukua (Ratu Nabanivalu) to Korovou, a hill top fortification just above Dakuibeqa, others preferred to follow his brother Nadreubalavu to Natuyawa, a large semi-defended ridge top site on the Raviravi's side, others stayed on the same coastline settling the village of Rukua. When Korovou fell under the Raviravi people's attacks, the Tui Rukua repaired at Vaga staying with the Sawau chiefs. However, as soon as peace was made with their brothers staying at Natuyawa, and they all regrouped at Rukua, claiming a parentele with the Tui Sawau and a *vasu levu* to Raviravi, under the orders of Ratu Sisa they planned firstly to attack Vagadra's fortification and the Sawau people to repair a tort.²²¹

E ra mai vala ko Sawau kei Rukua baleta ni ko Ratu Vari e mai kucuva na marama ka a duguci me watina na "Bainivalu" E mate kina e 10 na kai Sawau.

Ia, ni oti era baci vala ko Naceva kei keimami na kai Sawau e na vuku ni yalewa ni Naceva ko Sorowaqa ni veicavutaki mai ki Dakuibeqa. E ra tiko e na gauna koya na kai Sawau mai Dakuibeqa. E ra sa qai tagi i valu na

²²¹ Crosby reports that Rukua claims that the original Raviravi chief, Tui Tonobo, is their mother's brother, both in historial accounts and recent marriages and that they are Tui Sawau's maternal uncle (Crosby 1988b: 195).

kai Naceva ki Rukua, Raviravi, Nawaisomo, Navuli kei Serua. Sa yaco sara yani na itukutuku ki Rewa vua na Roko Tui Dreketi mai vua na Tui Raviravi. Ni sa rogo mai vei keimami na i naki koya, e ra sa baci soqo vata yani na kai Sawau ki Vagadra ka viri bai. E ra sa yaco mai na veimataivalu ka sa ra mai tara koro ni valu ka wavolivolita na neimami koro ko Vagadra.

Ko Roko Tui Dreketi e tiko mai na i Cibaciba ko Rukua, ko ira na Teri mai Serua e ra tiko mai Vatusiunalulu, ko Nawaisomo e Koroidoli, ko Raviravi e Udukadi, ko Navuli mai Nautonibokoi, ko Naceva mai Waiyalewa kei Deuba mai Nakoronawa. Sa rauta e dua na vula, sa qai vakananuma ko Roko Tui Dreketi kevaka e yaco na i valu e na levu sara na tamata e ra na mate kina ka na tubu talega kina na leqa ni vanua ka sa qai talatala yani ki vua na Tui Sawau ki Vagadra. E ratou a kau itukutuku kina ko Ratu Viliame, Ratu Vuru, Ro Sorokoverata kei Nodrakoro ki vua na Tui Sawau me tukuna kina na nona itukutuku na Roko Tui Dreketi ka me yalovinaka na Tui Sawau kei na vanua me soro mai, ka me nona isoro na Masi ni Tui Sawau.

E ra sa mani lewa na turaga kei Sawau vata kei na Tui Sawau me sa ia na soro ka sa isoro kina na masi ki vua na Roko Tui Dreketi. Sa mai kau yani ki Rewa na masi ka sa mai suka sara yani na i valu.

Sawau fought with Rukua because Ratu Vari tried to rape the lady that was engaged to the ‘Bainivalu’. Ten people from Sawau lost their lives during the battle.

After, a battle also arose between Naceva and Sawau because of a girl from Naceva by the name of Sorowaqa who was taken to be the wife of someone in Dakuibeqa. At that time, the Sawau people lived in Dakuibeqa. The people from Naceva requested the assistance in battle of those at Rukua, Raviravi, Nawaisomo, Navuli and Serua. The Tui Raviravi even sent a similar request to the Roko Tui Dreketi at Rewa. When we heard of their proposition, all the Sawau converged at Vagadra and begin to fortify the place. The armies (enemies) built their camps around the fortress at Vagadra.

Roko Tui Dreketi stayed at the *icibaciba* [departure point of the souls] at Rukua, the Teri people from Serua stayed at Vatusiunalulu, those from Nawaisomo stayed at Koroidoli, those from Raviravi resided at Udukadi, those from Navuli stayed at Nautonibokoi, those from Naceva at Waiyalewa and those from Deuba at Nakoronawa. After, almost a month had passed, Roko Tui Dreketi realised that if the battle had occurred, there would be a lot of casualties, and the *vanua* would suffer, thus he called for the Tui Sawau at Vagadra. Those who were the messengers to the Tui Sawau were Ratu Viliame, Ratu Vuru, Ro Sorokoverata, and Nodrakoro heralding the message of the Roko Tui Dreketi to the Tui Sawau and the *vanua* to kindly ‘cease fire’ and give up the title of Tui Sawau.

All elders of Sawau including the Tui Sawau agreed to the cease fire and gave the title to the Roko Tui Dreketi. The title was then taken to Rewa,

and the battle retreated. (Ratu Timoci Matanitobua 1926)

Between 1865 and 1871 several attempts were made to introduce peace and political stability in Fiji by means of ‘confederations’. In 1865 Cakobau and Ma‘afu were persuaded to cooperate in the establishment of a Confederacy of the six most powerful native dominions in Fiji: Bau, Rewa, Lakeba, Bua, Cakaudrove, and Macuata. The paramount chiefs of the six, claiming to speak for the whole Fiji islands, constituted a General Assembly with power to legislate a code of laws to be enforced throughout the whole country. In other words, the members were to retain their sovereignty, but agreed to observe a common code of laws and to unite for the preservation of peace and order. The Confederation was inaugurated on May 8th, 1865 under the Presidency of Cakobau. After a couple of years disagreements between Ma‘afu and Cakobau caused the failure of the Confederation. They both immediately set up institutions to control and safeguard their own spheres of influence throughout the Fijian archipelago. Ma‘afu, induced the chiefs of Lau, Cakaudrove and Bua to combine under his leadership in a Confederation called *Tovata iViti* or *Tovata iLau*, while Cakobau under the influence of the Europeans settlers based in Levuka adopted for his own dominion the form of a European monarchy modeled on the Hawaiian Constitution., which will become the basis of the so-called Cakobau Government of 1871. The *Tovata* under Ma‘afu’s direction was moderately successful and held together until 1871. Later Ma‘afu assumed later the title of Tui Lau. However, the ‘Bau monarchy’ collapsed within a year for internal dissention and lack of revenues.

In the meantime on Beqa, battle did not stop for long. Despite the Roko Tui Dreketi’s admonition, the Ratu Vari’s inclination to keep Beqa ‘disunited’ resulted in

another major battle. The following accounts recall that battle after which the Tui Rukua was taken prisoner to Bau but, ashamed to return to Rukua, committed suicide, while the Tui Sawau was taken prisoner to Rewa with his *gonedau* (head of the fishermen *mataqali*). The price of this last insubordination to Rewa caused the Tui Sawau (Ratu Vari) and his people, humiliation and deportation. However, this represented the last clash before the Cession to Great Britain in 1874. I believe that three accounts, respectively from Ratu Timoci Matanitobua (1926), Timoci Tebetebe (1927) and Manua Laveta (2005), must be reproduced vis-à-vis for they complete each other adding a series of significant details to the last chapter of Sawau's history in pre-Cession times.

Sega ni dede sa baci caka tale e dua na i valu. e ra a tagi i valu mai ki vei keimami na kai Sawau ko ira na kai Naceva, e a kau mai vei keimami e rua na tabua, dua mai vua na Vunivalu mai Serua ka dua mai vua na Qaranivalu mai Kadavu ka kerei keimami mai kina me keimami lako ki vukei Naceva. Ogo me keimami vala vata kei Rukua. Na vuni i valu ni ra sa mai teitei tiko e na nodra vanua vakaveitalia ka tauri talega kina e so na yalewa. Sa ia na i valu ka mate kina e dua vei keimami ka dua mai Rukua. Oti ogo e ra sa mai to vata kei Rukua ko Beqa kece ka dua nai to ko Sawau kei Naceva ka sa ra baci lako yani ki kabati Vagadra. E mate kina e dua vei ira ka oti e ra sa mai suka yani.

Ia, ni keimami sa mai tiko yani, sa qai kele mai ko Tui Lau (Maaifu) ka rau lako vata mai kei na Qaranivalu mai Kadavu ka laki tubera e dua na tabua na Qaranivalu ki Vagadra me i vakabale ni bai. Sa qai lewa ko Tui Lau me ra soqoni vata mai na turaga kei Beqa ka sa qai tukuna ko Tui Lau me sa mudu vakadua na i valu. Sa qai tukuna vei ira me ra lako yani na tamata bula me ra lako ki tea e dua na nona loga ni vauvau mai Vanua Balavu. E ra sa qai vodo yani e na Karolaini kei na Tui Nayau kei na Perinisi ka ra sa qai kila kina ni ra sa kau vakavesu ka laki yabaki lima mai Lau.

Ia, na Tui Sawau kei Tui Rukua, e sa lewa mai na Roko Tui Dreketi me rau mai kau vakavesu yani. Na Tui Sawau sa tiko mai Rewa vata kei ira na nona goneda, na Tui Rukua sa kau sara yani ki Bau. Ia, e na gauna e sa lewai kina me suka mai ko Tui Rukua sa mani madua me lesu mai ki nona koro, ka sa mani kunati koya mai Bau.

Ia, ni sa lesu mai ko Ratu Vari (Tui Sawau) vata kei ira na nona goneda

ka ra yaco mai ki Beqa ka tiko dede vakalailai sa vakarewa na kuila (1874).

Ia, ni sa mate ko Ratu Vari, sa bula na luvena ko Ratu Peceli Vitaukitoga. Na turaga ogo e sa qai lako yani ki Rewa me lako ki solevu vua na Roko Tui Dreketi ka me luvata mai kina na masi ni vanua, Tui Sawau. Sa luva oti mai Rewa na masi ka se sega ni buli e na masi koya ko Ratu Peceli e sa mai mate yani. Ia, ni sa mate sa bula tiko kina ko au, Ratu Timoci Matanitobua kei na taciqa ko Ratu Aca Naborisi.

Not for long, another battle arose. Those from Naceva sought the assistance of the people of Sawau. They brought two whales tooth, one from the Vunivalu of Serua, and one from the Qaranivalu of Kadavu, requesting our assistance and presence at Naceva, so that we could fight Rukua. The reason for the battle was that there were a lot of unnecessary planting without the landowners approval and the stealing of their (Naceva) women. After the battle, one our men and another from Rukua also died. After the battle, Rukua and all of Beqa joined forces while Sawau and Naceva became partners and they all met to fight at Vagadra. A member of the other army, which included Rukua and other Beqans, died. Thus, they retreated.

After the battle, the Tui Lau (Ma'afu) landed ashore with the Qaranivalu of Kadavu who brought a *tabua* to traditionally remove the protective fences at Vagadra. Tui Lau then requested that all the chiefs and elders of Beqa converge and told them that battles should end. He then told all men in full strength to go to Vanua Balavu to help in his cotton plantation. They then traveled on the *Karolaini* and the *Tui Nayau* and the *Perinisi*. Later they realized that were taken as prisoners, sentenced to five years in Lau.

Also the Tui Sawau and Tui Rukua were ordered by the Roko Tui Dreketi to be taken as prisoners. The Tui Sawau was then taken to Rewa with his *gonedau*. The Tui Rukua was then taken to Bau. However, by the time he was released he was too ashamed to go back to his village hence he committed suicide.

When Ratu Vari (Tui Sawau) and his *gonedau* returned, a short time after their arrival, Fiji was ceded to Great Britain (1874).

When Ratu Vari died, he was survived by his son Ratu Peceli Vitaukitoga. He was the person who travelled to Rewa to formally give to the Roko Tui Dreketi the *Masi ni vanua* [title] of Tui Sawau. Ratu Peceli died before the title was brought back from Rewa so that he could be installed. However, when he died, he was survived by myself, Ratu Timoci Matanitobua and my younger brother Ratu Aca Naborisi.) (Ratu Timoci Matanitobua 1926).

Ni sa cibi nai valu ka kabai tiko ko ira na neimani qase mai Vagadra ka sega ni vuwa na koro, nai valu ogo e yaco tiko ni sa tu na Lotu. Ni kabai tiko ko Vagadra, e bau tiko talega kina ko Ratu Rabici na Roko Tui Dreketi. Ni sa raica tiko ko Ratu Rabici na Roko Tui Dreketi nai valu ogo, e rairai vua ni ra lewe levu na baleti keimani e ra na mate kina, sa mani talatala yani kina vei Ratu Vari na Tui Sawau me luvata laivi mai vua na Masi ni Vanua ko Sawau me tu mada vua ka me sautu rawa kina na nodrai tikotiko me mudu kina nai valu. Oti, sa mani solia ko Ratu Vari vua na Roko Tui Dreketi na Masi ni vanua ko Sawau me tu vua, ka sa mani mudu kina na nodra veivaluvaluti na neimani qase.

Ni sa lesu tale ki Rewa ko koya na Roko Tui Dreketi, e rau qai yaco mai e muri ko Maafu na Tui Lau kei na Qeranivalu mai Tavuki, Kadavu, me rau mai vakabaleya na bai ni valu mai Vagadra, ka sa mani tukuna ko Maafu me rau sa kau vakavesu mada ko Ratu Vari na Tui Sawau kei Ratu Sisa na Tui Rukua, ko Ratu Vari e kau vakavesu ki Rewa, ko Ratu Sisa ki Bau.

Oti sa qai lewa ko Maafu me ra sa dui suka tale na nemani qase ki na nodra veikoro ni sa tu na Lotu, ka sa mani tauri ira talega vakavesu e so vei ira na neimani qase, ka vaka kina ki na veiyavusa kece vaka Beqa, ka kauti ira ki loloma me ra la'ki cakacaka vua.

Ni ra biuti Vagadra ki Dakuni, ni biu ko Dakuni ki Dakuibeqa. Ni ra sa tiko mai Dakuibeqa na neimani qase qai yaco tale mai ko Ratu Vari e na nona a tiko vaka mai Rewa. E ra tiko mai Dakuibeqa na neimani qase ka dede qai vakarewa e muri na Koila vaka-Peretania.

Ni sa vakarewa oti na Koila ka donuya ka Buli Sawau kina ko Ratu Peceli Vitaikitoga ka qai la'ki vakalututaka tale mai vua na Roko Tui Dreketi na Masi ni vanua ko Sawau, me vaka ni a taura tu e na gauna ka ra kabai kina na neimani qase mai Vagadra. Ni sa luvata mai ko koya na Roko Tui Dreketi na Masi ni vanua ko Sawau, ka sa mani mai taura tu ko Ratu Peceli, ka sa cavuti voli vua e na gauna ko ya me Tui Sawau, ia ka sa sega ga ni buli vakavanua.

This battle occurred when Christianity had arrived. Ratu Rabici²²², the Roko Tui Dreketi was also at the battle field while Vagadra was being attacked. While watching, Ratu Rabici saw that the battle would result in numerous people losing their lives, hence he called for Ratu Vari, the Tui Sawau, to renounce his title to him until peace prevailed in his *vanua*. Ratu Vari then gave his title to the Roko Tui Dreketi which resulted in peace in the *vanua* of Sawau and ceased the battle amongst our elders.

²²² Tui Cakau's son from Somosomo.

After the Roko Tui Dreketi had left for Rewa, the Tui Lau, Ma'afu and the Qaranivalu from Tavuki, Kadavu, arrived to de-fortify the fortification at Vagadra. Ma'afu also ordered Ratu Vari to be taken prisoner to Rewa and Ratu Sisa, the Chief of Rukua to be taken prisoner to Bau.

Ma'afu then ordered that all men returned to their respective villages, for Christianity had arrived [in Beqa] and here to stay. He also took some of our elders including those from other *yavusa* of Beqa to Lomaloma to work for him.

Our elders then left Vagadra for Dakuni before moving to Dakuibeqa. While our elders were at Dakuibeqa, Ratu Vari then arrived back from Rewa after serving his sentence. Our elders stayed at Dakuibeqa before British flag was hoisted signifying Fiji being ceded to Great Britain.

After cession [...] Ratu Peceli Vitaukitoga went to Rewa to retrieve the title [*Masi ni vanua*] from the Roko Tui Dreketi²²³ who hold it in his possession after the battle at Vagadra. When Ratu Peceli brought back the *Masi ni vanua*, he was called the Tui Sawau, however, he was not traditionally installed. (Timoci Tebetebe 1927)

Mai e Nabau, mai tiko kina o Tui Sawau, o koya sa qai kerekere tiko me lako yani ki Vagadra, baleta o Tui Sawau kei Tui Wainisigana o rau sega ni veikilai. Sa qai vakabau me lako yani ena nona kerekere toka, sa qai lako yani ko koya ki Vagadra, Tui Sawau yaco sara iVagadra. Iko o ratou na Tokalou eratou mai tiko e Qaratava idakuni Lololo, eratou sega ni lako e cake, ni oti sa qai caka na lotu sa qai tukuna o Roko Tui Dreketi me sa kua gona o Tui Sawau, baleta o Tui Sawau e solia na nona masi vei Roko Tui Dreketi, me sa kovana o Tui Sawau sa qai tukuni mera lako kece e wai o ira kece na lewe ni vanua baleta me wili me rawa ni vakamatanitu taki, ka kece qo sa qai ra toso mai wai, ra tiko mai wai sa qai ra toso mai Dakuni, o ratou mai Dakuibeqa eratou sa qai lako e Dakuibeqa. Sa qai vakaisulu sa sega na ivalu, sa na lotu, oti ratou sa qai lako yani na tokalau me ratou lako yani e Dakuibeqa. Tui ni valu sa qai soli qele vei ratou mai Vunidawa, kei Sausaolo, o ratou na tiko mai Dakuibeqa, sa qai lako yani o Tui Sawau ratou sa qai lai koro vata, na vilavilairevo tale ga sa lako tiko yani kina me laki yacova na gauna qo sa laki caka na lotu, oti sa qai vakamatanitu taki na vanua me vakamatanitu kei na lotu me tekivu mai na gauna oya, me yacova mai na gauna nikua, sa qai mani ra solia na itutu na veituraga tale eso me sa liuliu o Tui Sawau ena vanua vaka Sawau.

While at Nabau²²⁴ the Tui Sawau asked to be taken back to Vagadra,

²²³ Possibly, Ratu Timoci Tavanavanua (1874-1888).

²²⁴ Located on the east side of the island in Sawau land, this locale is considered taboo and off-

shortly after that Christianity arrived in Fiji and the Tui Dreketi announced that there should be no more Tui Sawau and that he should give up his throne to the Roko Tui Dreketi, which would also become the governor. All the people were instructed to regroup at the shore and that a census would be undertaken to install a proper management and restore coordination into the vanua, the land. Those from Dakuni went back to Dakuni, those from Dakuibeqa returned to Dakuibeqa and so on. At that point there were no more battles, Christianity had reached all over the island of Beqa. The land was redistributed among the clans. The Tui Sawau and the firewalking ceremony were repatriated to Dakuibeqa and are still there today. The church and co-ops became part of the village administration. The various chiefs within the Sawau tribe also indicated their consensus to have the Tui Sawau to head the Sawau *yavusa*. (Laveta pers. comm.)²²⁵

Beqa, the restless island once upon a time “subservient to no earthly power”

(Wilkes 1845; France 1969), sighted for the first time in 1799 by American ship *Anne of Hope*²²⁶ on her return voyage from Australia, faced and survived what Bigay and his team called a ‘rapid succession’ of events (Bigay et al. 1981: 47). Marked by fratricidal battles and disputes, conquered and massacred by Rewa, subdued by Bau, and later occupied by Ma‘afu’s Tongan troops who deported its men to Lau. Claimed by Ma‘afu, traded by Cakobau, property of the Polynesia Company for a short period, eventually rejoined the Colony of Fiji under the British Crown in 1874, unveiling to the colonial administration and to the world its singular gift of firewalking.

Blood and Soil: Sawau Social Organization

Fijian social organization is rooted in the land. In his study on the relationship between structure, history and material culture in Beqa, and successive articles, Crosby

limits, for it is supposedly where Ratu Drauniivilevu was murdered by his own brother Ratu Tabaiwalu.

²²⁵ Interview May 21 2005 h. 17:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

²²⁶ Captain Christopher Bentley.

(1988, 1994) observes that the gods and the land were inseparable in the ways in which Fijians worked the land, thought and theorized about it. Such a cosmological view is lacking from contemporary descriptions of the Fijian *vanua*, which is currently described in relatively static terms opposed to the notion of development. Today *vanua* has a multiple meaning: Ravuvu (1983, 1987, 1988) and Tuwere (2002) interpret *vanua* in the sense of place, also as ‘the people of the land, common descent, common bonds, parochialism, identity, and a source of *mana*. France (1969), Chapelle (1978), Walter (1978) and others have characterized the *vanua* as the legal ‘landowning group’ expressed in traditional terms. Nayacakalou (1975) and Lasaqa (1984) describe the *vanua* as a ‘decision making group’ for traditional affairs and the basis of traditional leadership. Watters (1969), Ward (1987) Overton (1988) and Arno (1993) identify the village located on *vanua* lands and the land itself with its social relationships and obligations, as the locus of traditional practices in Fiji. Jolly (1992b) notes that *vanua* means traditional culture in the widest sense. To behave *vakavanua* is to follow traditional custom and to make decisions in the traditional way. Thus, in its social, cultural and physical dimension *vanua* is represented by a group of kinsmen, an ethic or morality of sharing, togetherness (*duavata*), a focal point of beliefs in gods and ancestral spirits, a provider of food, resources from the gardens, the forest and the sea, and today also an income from rents and crops. These and other expression of *duavata* ‘togetherness’ ethic, frustrated the colonial government’s efforts at codifying land tenure under communal kin units (France, 1969).

Several factors contributed to the negotiation, shaping and ‘reinvention’ of Fijian social organization. Broadly speaking, the study of social organization investigates the

bonds linking individuals in social groups, and how conceptually they organize their lives. In practice, in Geertzian words, it became a Dickensian's King Charles's head in the profession of anthropology (Geertz 2001), focused primarily on the role of kinship terminology, clan structure, and Dravidian kinship systems. In the Fijian context, the 'old school' British organizational system based upon algebraic kinship studies appears more as a Eurocentric imposition than an emic organizative process. The new directions of the discipline of kinship and social organization (Donner 1997; Stone et al. 2001; Hage 2001) refuse to take for granted the underlying assumption of the biological basis of kinship, indicating that in 'simple societies', like the Fijian, the discipline as a whole should have greater attention to historical context, inequalities of power and strategies of resistance to dominant culture ideologies, intersections of ethnicity, influence of law and transnational forces on cultural constructions.

It seems to me that the best way to answer this question is with another question: should we talk about a one-size-fits-all model of Fijian social organization, or of several ones? It appears to me that from place to place, according to ethnographic accounts collected in Beqa (Crosby), Moala (Sahlins), Lau (Hocart, Arno) Nalotawa (Watters), Nahigatoka (Becker), Vanua Levu (Quain), Kadavu (Tomlinson), Gau Island (Toren) social organization often showed dissimilar characteristics. In the Lau Group for example, Hocart (1929) informs us about a 'female line' almost parallel to the patrilineal one, a convenient expedient when people have important claims on the mother's side (e.g., in the case of *vasu levu* custom would allow the high ranking mother's brother's-son to claim anything belonging to anybody in his mother's village). Quain (1948) writes about matrilineal moieties in Nakoroka. Rivers (1968), analyzing two main varieties of

social organization in Oceania (clan-exogamic and kinship-genealogical regulated marriages) notes an infinite number of ‘intermediate conditions’.

Toren (1990) observes that in the ‘ideal model’ of Fijian social organization, households are grouped patrilineally, but when Nayacakalou (1955, 1957), or Ravuvu (1987) argue that what they present (i.e. a patrilocal-patrilineal-exogamic society) is the ‘real’ Fijian kinship and social organizative system, it may be not realistically universally applicable throughout Fiji. Groves (1963) in his famous review of *Moala* (1962) escapes from Sahlins’ algebra. Arno (1993) points out that Groves shows the easiest way to understand Fijian system of kinship. Being a variety of the Dravidian two-section type, Groves suggests to see it as describing two intermarrying patriline. Groves observes that descent is ‘segmentary’ and validates ‘privilege’. Kinship is ‘cohesive’ and validates ‘collaboration’. Thus, Groves finds it meaningless to ask if the Moalan *itokatoka* (enlarged family unit) is a kin group or a descent group. Its members may invoke common descent to validate privileges such as the enjoyment of an estate in land from which they wish to exclude others, or they may invoke kinship to validate collaboration in an enterprise (such a feast) for which they need all the support available. Becker (1995) elaborates on this argument in her chapter on kinship and reciprocal exchange, observing that the Fijian kinship universe is an intricate web fortified by numerous non-kin relationships. Becker (1995) suggests that the use of the kinship system to represent genealogical and affinal relations is in some way secondary to its use for social manipulation, and reminds of the ‘plasticity’ of Polynesian kinship which Firth (1936) described among the Tikopia.

The literature concerning the nature and definition of the ‘traditional’ Fijian

socio-political groups: *vanua*, *yavusa*, *mataqali* and *itokatoka* is evidently disparate and varicolored. Crosby comments that “it is certain that in the past not all these labeled types of groups were recognized equally in every part of Fiji, and that their nature and relationship differed not just from island group to island group, but from village to village” (Crosby 1988bb: 129). As articulated in the preceding section, Kelly & Kaplan (2001) observe that in their myths Fijians told a story of the relationship between people of the land and foreign, powerful chiefs who arrived later to rule it. The British instead, in their myths told a story of a western Christian duty to civilize and protect ‘primitive’, ‘uncivilized’ indigenous people and of the desire of the uncivilized to be ruled by the civilized, advancing up on the evolutionary ladder (France, 1969). Perhaps the first ritual political step in the making of colonial Fiji was the acceptance of Christianity by Fijian chief ‘king’ Cakobau in 1854, but the most important ritual was the cession of 1874, the formal signing of a treaty that created the new polity ‘Fiji’, with an *ad hoc* designed social and political organization reflected in today’s three closely connected strands: *vanua*, *lotu* (church) and *matanitu* (government) (Tuwere 2002). What is emblematic is that almost forty years after the cession, in July 1912, after innumerable attempts, in less than six months, Fiji’s third governor, Sir Henry May, offered a report conceptualized along evolutionary lines (Fison 1881) in which the exact nature of the Fijian social structure was lucidly anatomized in what France calls the ‘Maxwell pyramid’ from the name of its inventor: *vanua/yavusa/mataqali/itokatoka/vuvale*.

Sir Henry explained that unless Fijians were able to mould their social organization in conformity with Maxwell’s pyramid, their claims to land would not be considered. In other words, if a *mataqali* or *itokatoka* failed to appear and give proper

evidence before the Commission, it was considered to be landless. The *mataqali* was gradually transformed through a number of causes unconnected with Fijian customs into the legally registered owner. By 1914, the *mataqali* in each village chiefdom of Fiji had been identified and registered and land formally allocated (Abramson 2000: 192). However, Groves (1963) and France (1969) observe that when at the 1956 census only 66% of Fijians were able to state both their *mataqali* and *yavusa* to which they belonged, it became evident that the official view of Fijian society was unreal. The tenets of the orthodoxy conceived and propagated by a protectionist colonial administration have become ineradicably absorbed into the Fijian national consciousness, and despite the decolonization and independence efforts are still regarded as immemorial tradition.

An example of what Sahlins has termed ‘dual system’, “a traditional system of kin groups and an official one, often in contradiction...which has resulted from the imposition of a simplified administratively modeled organization...a much more orderly conception of Fijian local society... an orderly pyramid of segmented kin groups” (Sahlins 1962: 236), emerges clearly from the account of the Sawau social organization narrated by the *matanivanua* of the Tui Sawau:

Ena gauna saraga oqo nai liuliu tiko ni vanua oqo na Gone Turaga na Tui Sawau. E oka kina na vanua o Rukua, Dakuibeqa, Dakuni kei Soliyaga. Ya na vanua vaka Sawau Ka kena Turaga na Turaga na Tui Sawau. Rau bati tiko ni Tui Sawau o Rukua kei Dakuni. O Naceva vaka ni kabi voleka toka mai Dakuibeqa e oka me neitou tikina. Naceva, Dakuibeka, Dakuni kei Soliyaga eratou valatokai me tikina o Sawau. Sa lutu kina o Rukua ni sa oka yani ki na tikina o Raviravi. Ia na vanua e vanua ga vaka Sawau. O Naceva e vanua tu ga vakai koya, e vanua vaka Serua. Ya nai tuvaki ni vanua ena gauna oqo, keitou veiqaravi tiko kina me vaka ni yali tiko na Tui Sawau, au taura tiko na vanua. Na vanua ga e yaco tiko kina na noqu veikacivi i Naceva, ena loma tiko ga ni tikina. Vakavo ke dua na oga ni vanua dina ko Sawau ena qai dau lako talega na mata i Rukua me lako me dua na bose vanua me baleti Sawau dina. Ena ka vakatikina ena gauna oqo na gauna vaka matanitu e tauri tiko ga kina o Naceva, Dakuibeqa,

Dakuni kei Soliyaga. Ia na vanua qo o Sawau e cabe ga vakadua vua na Marama Bale na Roko Tui Dreketi.

At this point in time, the head of the *vanua* is the Tui Sawau. Other villages linked to Sawau include Rukua, Dakuibeqa, Dakuni, and Soliyaga. These are all tributaries of Sawau headed by the Tui Sawau. The warriors for Tui Sawau are Rukua and Dakuni. Even Naceva, because of its vicinity to Dakuibeqa is considered a member of this district. Hence, Naceva, Dakuibeqa, Dakuni and Soliyaga belong to the district of Sawau. Rukua has been dropped from the list for it is under the district of Raviravi. However, in terms of *vanua* Rukua is under Sawau. Even Naceva is an independent *vanua*, it comes under the *vanua* of Serua. That is the current status/structure of the *vanua* nowadays. We [*matanivanua* clan] are currently looking after the *vanua* in Tui Sawau's absence. My calls and undertakings for the *vanua* ends at Naceva, district-wise. For Rukua, the only exception, is when there is to be a communal undertaking for the *vanua* of *Sawau* and not its 'district', hence, an ambassador to Rukua will be sent informing them of the meeting for the *vanua* of *Sawau*. In terms of District using the current set-up by government villages include Naceva, Dakuibeqa, Dakuni and Soliyaga. However, the *vanua* of Sawau communicates directly with the Marama Bale na Roko Tui Dreketi.²²⁷ (Nabure pers. comm.)²²⁸

Drawing on Crosby's ethnographic work (1988b), in order to understand group formation in Beqa, I believe it is necessary to understand the principles by which the members see themselves to be related, and by which the groups are seen to have formed. The accounts seen in the previous section are showing that the Sawau *yavusa* share links to ancestral gods through patrilineal descent. Through this descent people are believed to share interests in land, identity, actions and character of their common ancestors. Crosby (1988b) observes that on Beqa, people believe that group's labels, especially *mataqali*, are a recent construction. The previous section shows that before the Pax Britannica Beqa people simply lived in 'groups' which were just called by their tribal name which

²²⁷The *matanivanua* Nemani Nabure refers to the Marama na Roko Tui Dreketi, Paramount Chiefess of Rewa and Traditional Head of Burebasaga Confederacy Ro Adi Lady Litia Cakobau Lalabalavu Kaloafutoga Tuisawau Mara (Adi Lady Lala Mara, married to Fijian President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara), after her death (July 20, 2004) known as the Gone Marama Bale na Roko Tui Dreketi.

²²⁸ Interview Nov. 24 2004 h. 20:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

reflected the original settlement locality: Sawau, Raviravi, Rukua etc. Turner (1988) argues that in the ‘Fijian way’, people who ‘stay together’ (*tiko vata*) share a bond that rivals kinship and descent as an organizational principle: the place where they live defines *who* they are.

Patrilocality notwithstanding, in Beqa—like in most Fiji—the enduring link to the mother’s side relatives is also important, in particular the relationship with the mother’s brothers (*momo*)²²⁹, and by extension with their *vuvale*, *itokatoka*, *mataqali* and *koro*. In Beqa as Crosby (1988b: 136) has recognized, the most basic kinship distinctions are those underlined by Groves: “throughout Fiji, with minor local variations, it is possible to contrast the informality of Ego’s relations on the one hand with (a) Father or Father’s Brother, (b) Mother or Mother’s Sister, (c) Brother or Male Parallel-Cousin and (d) Female Cross-cousin, and the formality of his relations on the other hand with (a) Father-in-law or Mother’s Brother, (b) Mother-in-law or Father’s sister, (c) Sister or Female Parallel-cousin, and (d) Male Cross-cousin, respectively. The formal relationship are said to be ‘serious’” (Groves 1963: 280). Kinship (*veiwakani*) is fundamental to Fijian social organization. The next section shows how in the context of the Sawau’s *bete* clan of Dakuibeqa (*mataqali* Naivilaqata) Fijian kinship on the one hand respects and reflects the fundamental social grouping, and on the other hand it establishes through marriages a blood link and a sense of unity stronger than any hierarchy and group categorization.

In Arno’s words, “[kinship] potential stretches well beyond the shores of the island” (Arno 1993: 51). While adoption of non-kin outsiders into the ‘corporate groups’ (*yavusa*, *mataqali* and *itokatoka*) is freely permitted (Biturogoiwasia 2001: 45),

²²⁹ From his mother’s brothers perspective, his sisters’ children are his *vasu*, and as such they are allowed a joking relationship with him and the members of his group.

descendants of an illegitimate child within the group are considered “somewhat outside the system of seniority” (Arno 1993: 57). Thus, such groups, only theoretically, are comprised of the patrilineal descendents of a common male ancestor. Geddes’s ethnography of Deuba, shows that while the basis of social organization in Deuba is the *yavusa*, the endogamous or exogamous group which in a true, or theoretical *yavusa*, would refer its origin to the one founder, worship the same ancestor god (*Kalou vu*), respect the same totems and acknowledge one chief, these first three characteristics are absent in Deuba’s principal *yavusa*²³⁰, for it is a composite formation from portions of several ‘true’ *yavusa*, which is integrated only by allegiance to the same head, by a sense of unity and by a slight degree of group-organization (Geddes 2000 [1945]: 50).

In his account (1927), Taitusi Tebetebe states that while staying at Sawau, Tui Naivilaqata’s descendants increased subdividing into four main groupings: Buto, Naqara, Naivilaqata, Navusalevu.

Nai wasewase lelevu e va ogo era mataqali. Sa keimuki cavuti levu ga vakavanua ko ‘Sawau’, Sa vaka to ogo na kedrai wasewase lelevu vakavanua na neimami qase ni ra tiko mai Sawau.

These groupings were the main clans. However, our traditional collective name was ‘Sawau’. These were the main divisions and subdivisions of our ancestors while at Sawau:

<i>mataqali</i>	Buto	(<i>turaga</i> / chiefly clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Tikina	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Waikalen	
<i>mataqali</i>	Naqara	(<i>matanivanua</i> / spokesmen clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Naqara	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Naivilolo	
<i>mataqali</i>	Naivilaqata	(<i>bete</i> / priestly clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Naivilaqata	

²³⁰ *Yavusa* Dravuni.

<i>itokatika</i>	Solosolo	
<i>mataqali</i>	Navusalevu	(<i>bati</i> / warriors)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Navusalevu	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Kiowa	

Sai koya ogo na kedrai wasewase ne neimami qase ni ra tiko mai Sawau. E ra tiko kina dede, e ra sai qai veivosaki ka kau na kena i tukutuku ki na veiyavusa kece vaka-Sawau me ra sa la'ki buli Ratu e dua na turaga mai Nacurumoce me liutaki ira ka ra vakatoka me yacana buli taumada, e ra sa mani vakarorogo tiko yani vua vakavanua na neimani qase kei ira na veiyavusa vaka-Sawau.

E ra tiko mai Sawau na neimami qase ka dede e ra sa qai veivosaki me ra sa biuti Sawau ka ra la'ki cokotaki Navakaisese me nodra koro. Ni ra sa tiko mai Navakaisese, qai tubu e dua na nodra veisei ni ra veididivakitaka na vakalolo, e ra qai biuti Navakaisese kina e dua kenai wase ka la'ki cokotaki Nakorokobua me nodra koro; sai ira ogo.

These were the major groupings of our ancestors while at Sawau. For some time, while at Sawau, the elders sat together and discussed and sent their decision and propositions to all *yavusa* that belong to the *vanua* o Sawau to install Ratu, a chief at Nacurumoce, as their traditional leader bestowing him with the title of Tui Sawau. He was the first Tui Sawau to be installed, hence, all elders, tribes and people of the *vanua* of Sawau listened to him as their head.

Our elders stayed for a while at Sawau before they decided to move to Navakaisese and make it their village. While at Navakaisese a dispute arose over *vakalolo* [pudding] making resulting in a portion of the group leaving for Nakorokobua, and later making it as their village. These were the portions that left:

<i>mataqali</i>	Buto
<i>itokatoka</i>	Tikina
<i>mataqali</i>	Naivilaqata
<i>itokatoka</i>	Naivilaqata

At this point of the narration, Taitusi Tebetebe account recalls the stories of Ratu Vari's period, the fratricidal battles, the defeat of Vagadra, the intervention of the Roko Tui Dreketi from Rewa—to whom the *masi ni vanua* is given—Ma'afu and the arrival of Christianity in Beqa (all reported in the previous section), concluding:

Ni keimami tiko mai Dakuibeqa, ka sa mani vaka tu oqo na keimami i wasewase vakavanua:

This was our general structure/groupings at Dakuibeqa, after returning [of Ratu Peceli Vitaukitoga from Rewa with the *masi ni vanua*]:

Yavusa ko Sawau Tribe
Yavusa ko Nacurumoce

mataqali Nakoroqaqa
itokatoka Nakoroqaqa

mataqali Buto
itokatoka Tikina
 Wailakeni

mataqali Naqara
itokatoka Naqara
itokatoka Naivilolo

mataqali Naivilaqata
itokatoka Naivilaqata
itokatoka Solosolo

mataqali Navusalevu
itokatoka Navusalevu
itokatoka Kiowa
 (Taitusi Tebetebe 1927)

Similar, but with some discrepancies in terms of groups' names and divisions, is Ratu Timoci Matanitobua's account (1926).

Au taka mai Rewa. Au lako mai ka yaco sara mai ki Nacurumoce. Au sa mai tara koro sara kina me noqu yavutu. A kauti au mai ko Ratu, ka sa tubu me keimami lewe levu sara. Keimami sa qai mai wase vakalima ka sa yacai keimami na yavusa ko Sawau. Na keimami cavuti levu ko Nacurumoce. Noqu mataqali ko Nakoroqaqa.

I came from Rewa until I arrived at Nacurumoce. I built a village there as my *yavutu*. I was brought by Ratu, and we have grown in numbers. We were then divided into five groups and our *yavusa* was called Sawau. Our tribal name is Nacurumoce. My clan is known as Nakoroqaqa.

mataqali Nakoroqaqa (*turaga* / chiefly clan)

<i>itokatoka</i>	Nakoroqaqa	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Vale i Sau	(<i>e sa lala</i> / extinct)
<i>Mataqali</i>	Cagi i Ra	(<i>sauturaga</i> / advisers to the chief)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Cagi i Ra	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Nubulevu	(<i>e sa lala</i> / extinct)
<i>mataqali</i>	Jilivai	(<i>matanivanua</i> / spokesmen clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Navusalevu	
<i>tokatoka</i>	Naivilolo	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Solosolo	
<i>mataqali</i>	Jikina	(<i>bete</i> / priestly clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Jikina	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Naivilaqata	
<i>mataqali</i>	Buto	(<i>bati</i> / warriors clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Buto	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Kioa	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Naro	

Ia, ni keimami sa tiko vakadede keimami sa tubu me lewe vuqa sara ka sa oso na neimami vanua mai na neimami yavutu ka sa qai wase tani e rua na i wase.

But while staying in the same place for quite a while our numbers grew, hence, our village and *yavutu* became small in size resulting in the departure of two groups from the original group.

E dua na i wase e ra lako ki Vagadra ka dua na i wase e ra lako ki Soliyaga.

One of the groups moved to Vagadra, while the other moved to Soliyaga.

Ko keimami na tiko laivi mai Nacurumoce, keimami sa tiko dede vakalailai ka ra sa qai toki cake yani na kai Sawau ki Navakaisese (Delana). Ko keitou kei iratou na neitou gonedau kei iratou na Sauturaga, keitou sa mani tikoga kina e na neitou yavutu.

The rest of us who were at Nacurumoce, stayed for a while before the Sawau people moved to Navakaisese (hill). My clan, including the traditional fishermen (*gonedau*), and the nobles (*sauturaga*) clan stayed at our *yavutu* [Nacurumoce].

Sa dede vakalailai na nodra tu mai Navakaisese ko ira na kai Sawau, sa qai wase tani mai na Mataqali ko Jikina e na itokatoka ko Naivilaqata.

Oqo ko iratou na kai Lomai, ka dua na kena i wase sa tawase tani mai e na Mataqali ko Buto. Oqo ko iratou na kai Levuka.

The Sawau people stayed for sometime at Navakaisese before the *itokatoka* Naivilaqita separated from the Jikina Clan. These are the people from Lomai; another separated from the Buto Clan. These were people from Levuka.

Ko i keitou, keitou tiko ga mai na yavutu ka mai tolu kina na i liuliu ni neitou mataqali. Ko Ratu, Ratu Ova kei Vakatonosau. Sa mate ko Vakatonosau ka bula na luvena ko Ratu Saumaimuri.

Those of us who stayed back at the *yavutu* had three clan heads. Ratu, Ratu Ova and Vakatonosau. Vakatonosau died and was survived by his son Ratu Saumaimuri.

Ia, ni sa dede vakalailai, keitou sa qai biuta mai na neitou yavutu ka keitou sa mai muri ira yani na neitou yavusa. Keitou sa mani la'ki tauyavutaki Vaga vata kei iratou na lewe ni noqu Mataqali kei iratou na noqu goneda kei iratou na Sauturaga. E a kauti keitou voli mai ko Ratu Saumaimuri.

After while we left our *yavutu* and followed where our *yavusa* went. We then went and inaugurate Vaga *vata*, including all members of my clan, my fishermen, and the *sauturaga* clan. It was Ratu Saumaimuri who leaded our delegation. (Ratu Timoci Matanitobua 1926)

Besides their accurateness, or to decide which account should reach posterity, these two coeval accounts reproduced vis-à-vis emphasize poignant issues. Firstly, they show how supple and variable these sub-divisions are. Arno observes that “the historical reality of group formation provides great flexibility of interpretation. Every *mataqali* contains certain *itokatoka* whose origins and relationship to the others can be challenged” (Arno 1993: 57). Secondly, the two accounts manifest the *turaga/vanua* parallel opposition, a hierarchical pattern characteristic of many villages in Fiji, where the chiefly status is opposed to the land status, often epitomized as sea opposed to land, chiefly opposed to non-chiefly. Thirdly, the two accounts show the limits of the *Tukutuku Raraba* (1927),

which encountering the orthodoxy of the colonial officer collecting them, apply an idealized, artificial model of the Fijian traditional social organization (Groves 1963).

While keeping the two *yavusa*, Sawau and Nacurumoce, as two separate entities, Tebetebe's bottom-up account creates an historic and genealogical vacuum between the installation of Ratu as the Sawau paramount chief and the return, six generations after (after the Cession of Fiji to Great Britain), of Ratu Peceli Vitaukitoga with the title (*masi ni vanua*). Only at this point the *yavusa* of the chiefs at Nacurumoce (i.e., the Tui Sawau and the *mataqali* Nakoroqaqa) results 'legitimized'. Ratu Timoci Matanitobua's account's strategy instead moves top-down, combining the two *yavusa* and 'incorporating' the chiefly *mataqali* with the other land *mataqali*. The result is a narrative that flows through six or seven generations of Sawau's history maintaining a centrality on the hierarchical role of the paramount chief, while at the same time allowing the idea of a continuous group ramification and settlement of new villages on the island.

This circumstance is made clear by Arno: "when households whose heads all trace descent from a single male ancestor become numerous enough, they may split off from their existing group and form a new *itokatoka*. The rank of that new entity will be determined by the rank of its founding ancestor—it will be superior to those *itokatoka* tracing ancestry to individuals junior to him, and inferior to those whose ancestors in his generation were his senior." (Arno 1993: 53). For a better understanding of the next sections and chapters, I am also reproducing the 'orthodoxical' structure of Sawau's social organization in Dakuibeqa—as it

appears one the current *Ai Vola ni Kawa*—reconstructed on then base of Taitusi Tebetebe’s information:

<u>yavusa</u>	<u>Nacurumoce</u>	
<i>mataqali</i>	Nakoroqaqa	(<i>turaga</i> / chiefly clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Nakoroqaqa	
<u>yavusa</u>	<u>Sawau</u>	
<i>mataqali</i>	Buto	(<i>matanivanua</i> / spokesmen clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Tikina	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Wailakeni	
<i>mataqali</i>	Naqara	(<i>matanivanua</i> / spokesmen clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Naqara	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Naivilolo	
<i>mataqali</i>	Naivilaqata	(<i>bete</i> / priestly clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Naivilaqata	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Solosolo	
<i>mataqali</i>	Navusalevu	(<i>bati</i> / warriors clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Navusalevu	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Kiowa	
<u>yavusa</u>	<u>Gonedau</u>	
<i>mataqali</i>	Valeilawa	(<i>gonedau</i> / fishermen clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Valeilawa	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Koronuqanuqa	

A final comment about the inefficacy of these ‘artificial divisions’

emerges from my notes of the visit to Dakuibeqa of the Assistant Roko of Rewa,

Taniela Tabukarawa and NLFC Officer Watisoni Waqa on December 7, 2004.

The argument of the *vanua* attending the census meeting was that both *mataqali* and *itokatoka*, are susceptible of changes, in other words ‘merges and acquisitions’ like corporations do, and in some cases die out and disappear from

the village, like in the case of the *mataqali* Navusalevu.²³¹ Thus, both *mataqali* Naqara and Naivilaqata at one point merged according their members, splitting among the two of them. More precisely splitting an extended family (*itokatoka*) named after a piece of Sawau land on the west coast of Beqa: Natokalou, which never appeared neither on the *Ai Vola ni Kawa* registry, nor in the *Tukutuku Raraba*. This circumstance is confirmed by the the 90 year old *bete levu* Sevanaia Waqasaqa, who recalls the investiture of the Tui Sawau at Nacurumoce right after his landing in Beqa.

Ratou sa toka ya, ratou caka nodratou yavu toka ya, ratou cawiri mai i Natokalou, kuvu na buka mai Nadurumoce, qai talatala mai, o kena turaga mai cake, ena koro e rua o Natokalou, Vunidawa. "lai raica mada o cei e vakuvu buka mai ra" mai vei rai, suka cake tale yani o matanivanua lai tukuna, "dua na turaga e vakuvu buka toka mai ra, e sa tawa na vanua e lako mai kina." Kena ibalebale je tagane rairai vinaka, sa qai lewai mai cake nodra turaga mai Natokalou, me sa lakovi mai. Lakovi mai kau cake yani sa qai lai, sa qai lai lewai kina me je turaga ga, sa qai lai lewai me je turaga ga. Qo na ka ena italanoa sega ni kila e vei na ka dina, sega ni ka ni veitarogi vanua.

After building their *yavu*, they stayed there [Nacurumoce] for a while. Smoke begun to appear from Nadurumoce, hence, the elders of Natokalou and Vunidawa sent for the *matanivanua* to go and check. "Kindly go see whose creating smoke in that area below". The *matanivanua* went to enquire and returned to the *turaga* to refer what he had seen. "There's a man down there, he's the one who started the fire. There are also others with him." And he is handsome. The chief of Natokalou then ordered to be brought to him. When brought before him he was then made a chief [Tui Sawau]. This is just a story, where the truth lies I do not know, this is not even with the Native Lands records. (Waqasaqa pers. comm.)²³²

²³¹ The *mataqali* Navusalevu is still present in the NLFC registry although nobody is left in the village. Of the *itokatoka* Navulasalevu Salote Radinisuva (born in 1927) supposedly retired in Suva, with two daughters and a cousin, while three other descendents Jioana Koro (born in 1931), Ana Rogowale (born in 1934), Suliasi Molicegei (born in 1937) and his son Selema Rai Molidegei (born in 1979) migrated abroad.

²³² Interview Nov. 24 2004 h. 15:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

Reproduced hereafter is just *one* of the alternative ‘emic’ classifications. In fact, Natokalou is by some of its members considered a *mataqali*, while Naivilaqata is considered a *itokatoka* (Vakuruivalu pers. comm.²³³; Ratulevu pers. comm.²³⁴)

<i>mataqali</i>	Naqara	(<i>matanivanua</i> / spokesmen clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Naqara	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Natokalou	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Naivilolo	
<i>mataqali</i>	Naivilaqata	(<i>bete</i> / priestly clan)
<i>itokatoka</i>	Natokalou	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Naqara	
<i>itokatoka</i>	Solosolo	

Geddes observes that over time a *mataqali* splits several times, often as the result of a quarrel (Geddes 1945). Moreover, he observes that the alternative names by which a *mataqali* is known refer either to the place at which that section of the *mataqali* separated from the parent body or to some event in connection with that separation (Geddes *ibid.*). In conclusion, as I had anticipated in the opening of this section, contemporary kinship studies tend to be historically grounded, tend to focus on everyday experiences, understandings and representations of gender, power, and difference, rather than being reduced to formulae and equations. Thus, kinship studies tend to devote considerable analytic attention to themes of contradiction, paradox and ambivalence (Malinowski 1930; Peletz 1995).

Deference and Reference among the Naivilaqata’s clan

The *mataqali* Naivilaqata, the priestly clan of the Sawau *yavusa*, is central to this study. It identifies the custodians of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony’s knowledge, over the

²³³ Interview Dec. 7 2004 h. 7:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

²³⁴ Interview Dec. 24 2004 h. 14:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

centuries forging and fostering the oneness and uniqueness of the Sawau people. As anticipated in the previous chapters, during the course of my ethnography in Beqa I was a guest of the household (*vuvala*) of Samuela ('Samu') Vakuruivalu, a direct descendant of the *bete levu* Rusiate Rokotavo,²³⁵ the earliest recorded progenitor of the *mataqali* Naivilaqata. I agree with Toren (1990) that family life in a Fijian village is not a "miniature of the political community" as Sahlins argues (Sahlins 1976: 33). However, observing the hierarchical relations between the kin within Samu's household—mostly based on the ideas of respect (*veidokai*) and deference (*vakarokoroko*) for the elders, care for the young and respect my means of avoidance between a man, his sister, his wife's sisters and his mother's brother—I was also able to observe how hierarchy and equality manifest themselves in the relations that are *vakaveiwekani* ('in the manner of kinship') (Toren 1990: 29) among the households part of the *itokatoka* Naivilaqata. For the purpose of this section, it is sufficient to say that all relationships can be conceptualized and referred to as kin relations: with the exception of the equal relation between cross-cousins, all kinship relations are hierarchical and require varying degrees of respect and avoidance (Toren 1994: 199-200; 1990: 43), being attentive and complying (*vakarorogo*) to those who hold traditionally defined authority in the group (Ravuvu 1995: 103).

Arno observes that words in Fijian society are used to call on the power of shared sentiments. This "economy of sentiment" translates into *veilomani* which expresses a mutuality of *loloma* (love) and *veidokai* (mutual respect) (Arno 2005). These traits become more evident when observing the whole kinship context of the fourteen

²³⁵ See Appendix C for the complete genealogy of the *mataqali* Naivilaqata.

Naivilaqata households in Dakuibeqa.²³⁶ In particular, I noticed that the respect for elders, ancestors and the narratives associated to their feats and to *vilavilairevo*, becomes reflected in the Naivilaqata onomasticon and in their household names. Though my interest in personal names is limited to the relationship between kinship and clan ties among the *mataqali* Naivilaqata and in particular among its homonymous *itokatoka*, I am drawing on Arno's study, which analyses the relative bias toward maternal or paternal lines of descent in relation to almost 1,500 personal names he collected on the island of Moce. Arno observes that "giving a name, whether to people, canoes, houses, or gardens, is an important and valuable right" (Arno 1994: 26). More precisely, " 'word has meaning' while a 'name has reference' " (Gasque 1991: 219, quoted in Arno 1994: 21). Fijian hierarchy rests through both patrilineal descent and primogeniture. In the case of the Naivilaqata, children are normally named for their paternal grandfathers²³⁷, or after one of the members of their father's kin group, for in Fiji this privilege rests with patrilineal kinsmen (Arno 1994; Ravuvu 1995; Biturogoiwasa 2001). According to Ravuvu, this is an important way of tracing one's paternal kinship relationship and defining kin group membership based on one's male descendants, thus a male child is usually named after his grandfather and a girl is named after either one of her paternal grandmothers or after her father's sister (Ravuvu 1995: 61).

Interestingly, among the *itokatoka* Naivilaqata some personal names reflect both family history and clan elites and are handed down to the eldest male in the family in each generation, commemorating and reinforcing both narratives and social relationships

²³⁶ A fifteenth Naivilaqata household, belonging to Alifereti Kamikamica exists in Dakuni.

²³⁷ A person's name in Fiji consists of at least two parts, one 'Biblical', and one 'descriptive' Fijian.

among its members. Building on Arno (1994), among the Naivilaqaata, names *become* narratives and links to particular stories and events. Particularly recurrent are the names belonging to the the agnatic *bete* of *vilavilairevo*, hence the narratives associated to their epic doings. In other words, names become knowledge. My findings indicate six prominent forefathers and *bete levu* in the Naivilaqaata's clan (see Appendix C), which represent fundamental coordinates in maintaining the community's oneness, community's narratives and ontological security:

Rusiate Rokotavo (n.d.), earliest recorded progenitor of the *itokatoka* Naivilaqaata and forefather of 'modern firewalking'. His namesake is bestowed four times: in 1935, 1961, 1985, 1979, while the second name Rokotavo is given to two males in 1994 and 2001 and two females in 1988.

Sevanaia Waqasaqa (1866-1938), who unveiled the firewalking ceremony to the world, in occasion of the *New Zealand International Exhibition* held in Christchurch in 1905. His namesake is bestowed five times: in 1916, 1939, 1965, 1983, while just the second name Waqasaqa is given to one male in 1981 and to three females in 1968, 1977 and 1986.

Mosese Naivalu (1872-n.d.), Sevanaia Waqasaqa's brother, remembered as a 'traditionalist', who also took part in the memorable trip to New Zealand. His namesake is bestowed four times: in 1928, 1947, 1963, 1983, while just the second name Naivalu is given to six males in 1950, 1973, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, and three females in 1972, 1983 and 1985.

Semi Raikadra (1904-1972), the *bete* who changed everything during the eventful trip to India in 1972 to assure a future to the ritual to the detriment of his own health and

eventually his life. His namesake is bestowed three times: in 1937, 1965, 1999, while just the second name Raikadra is given to one male in 1962 and one female in 1997.

Marika Tivitivi (1899-1964), who according to his son Samu Vakuruivalu, ‘somatized’ paying with his own life the responsibility and vexations related to his role of custodian of the ceremony. Hence, by request from the Tui Sawau of that time, Ratu Aca Naborisi, he received the honor to be buried in the chiefly family’s graveyard in Dakuibeqa. His namesake is bestowed four times: in 1939, 1969, 1974 and n.d..

Pita Koroisavulevu (1909-n.d.), the most subversive²³⁸, versatile ambassador of the firewalking ceremony, the first *bete* inclined to meet the tourism new requirements of ritual’s aesthetics. His namesake, shortened in ‘Koroi’ is bestowed two times: in 1978 and 2001, and more recently to Salanieta Davutu’s penultimate son. In addition, the name Pita Tukana (the term *tukana* is used to define a senior relative) was given two times in 1945 in memory of his grandfather Pita Koroisavulevu and more recently in 1974 to a brother’s son.

At the time of my research, the *bete levu* was Sevanaia Waqasaqa (1916-2007), one of the few elders who have lived their entire life in the village of Dakuibeqa and who has sadly recently passed away in January 2007. His son Marika Tiviti, known also as “Big Marika” has replaced him.

Lastly, I shall include Salanieta Davutu (1900-n.d.), the daughter of *bete levu* Sevanaia Waqasaqa (1866-1938), sister of Marika Tivitivi (1899-1964), whose singular story, between myth and reality, of how she became the first woman to perform *vilavilairevo* is narrated in Chapter 5. Her namesake is bestowed four times: in 1947,

²³⁸ See Chapter 5.

1969, 1977 and 1978.

Irrespectively of their immediate kin affiliation, but respectful of clan affiliation, these ancestral names appear to define clanship, oneness and knowledge rather than mere kinship. This unique characteristic and the names themselves are reserved to the *itokatoka* Naivilaqata, and not found among the other Naivilaqata *itokatoka* (Solosolo) or the other four *mataqali* (Buto, Naqara, Navusalevu, Valeilawa), which seem to follow a more general pattern of assignation. Among the *itokatoka* Solosolo for example, the name Turaganivalu, after the earliest recorded ancestor Ame Turaganivalu (1896-1940), is definitely recurrent over the years. However, the progenitor's complete name was bestowed only one time in 1914.

In the other cases the name Turaganivalu is preceded by a different 'Biblical' name (either male and female): Donasio, 1948 (M);²³⁹ Wame, 1964 (M); Susana, 1969 (F); Viliame, 1971 (M); Noa, 1972 (M); Peni, 1973 (M); Adi Qaro, 1975 (F); Jale, 1977 (F); Unaisi Tunatewa, 1978 (F); Ulamila, 1979 (F); Ana Maramaniyanuyan, 1982 (F); Eseta, 1983 (F); Mereoni Camailakeba, 1987 (F); Epironi Vuadreu, 1987 (M); Vilimaina Likutabua, 1990 (F); Susana Kamikamica, 1997 (F); Nacani Bulita, 1999 (M); Mereoni Adilele, 2000 (F); Virisila Naiteki, 2000 (F); Akosita Faith, 2002 (F); Peni, 2005 (M). In the case of the *mataqali* Naqara, *itokatoka* Naqara (spokesmen clan), the name of the earliest recorded progenitor Apimeleki Tuicaucau (1891-1960) is bestowed only two times in 1935 and 1969, and the one of his brother Nimilote Ratudina (1895-n.d.) three times in 1956, 1982 and 1994. In the case of the *yavusa* Gonedau, *mataqali* Valeilawa, *itokatoka* Valeilawa (fishermen clan), the name of the earliest recorded progenitor Aseli

²³⁹ M = male / F = female.

Tabuavou (1886-1941) is only bestowed three times in 1929, 1948, and 1978.

Each household in Dakuibeqa has a name. In Fiji, houses' names are derived from incidents, places or objects of interest of the house-holder (see Geddes 1945; Arno 1994). Like in Rosaldo's study among the Ilongot of the Philippines, the boundaries between lexicon, onomasticon, and history appear quite permeable and elastic, allowing a free flow of phonological and semantic associations to form paths from one name to another and from names to words and events (Rosaldo 1984: 22, quoted in Arno 1994: 24).

Among the *itokatoka* Naivilaqata, where names are narrative and knowledge, associated to particular stories and events related to the *vilavilairevo*, residential houses instead of referring to, *pour dire*, 'Samu's house', show a name pattern in some cases clearly related to their agnatic ancestors and peripherally to the *vilavilairevo*. (*bete levu*) Sevanaia Waqasaqa's household, *Nakauyama* is named after the biggest *bure* in the ancient village of Navakaisese where Tui Qalita brought back the gift of *vilavilairevo*; (*bete*) Samu Vakuruivalu's household, *Namoliwai*, is evidently named after the place where mythically the gift of *vilavilairevo* was exchanged between Tuiqalita and the deity; (*bete*) 'Big' Paula Levulevu's household, *Togalevu* is named after the locale of the former Fishermen's Lodge where his father Pita Koroisavulevu introduced and performed the *vilavilairevo*; (*bete*) 'Small' Marika Tivitivi's household, *Nakavu* is associated to a previous Naivilaqata settlement on the south-east side of Beqa; Tasi Balewai's household, *India*, is clearly associated to the memorable trip the firewalkers of Beqa took in 1972 under the leadership of Semi Raikadra. Similarly, are the names of overseas places visited by the firewalkers adopted in Rukua village for some of their households: *Niu Siladi*, *Honolulu*, *Singapore* (see Aporosa Bulivou recorded by Mika Tubanavau in

1978, quoted in Crosby 1988a: 69; Burns 1993: 216). In the late 1800s, during his journey through the hills region, Brewster had already noted how ancient Fijian names had been often “confounded with Biblical terms of the new religion” like *Roma*, *Papiloni* (Babylon), *Ijipita* (Egypt) (Brewster 1922: 68).

A concrete exemplification of ‘mutuality’ within social relationships, emerges from my fieldnotes. In December 2003 I was able to witness a novel form of celebration of Naivilaqata kin membership: ‘The Naivilaqata Day’. Starting in 2003, Pita Tukana, a *mataqali* elder, has launched the idea of reuniting once a year all the members of the clan Naivilaqata. In 2004, as part of their fund-raising activity for the Naivilaqata's children, they printed more than one hundred *sulu* saying: “Naivilaqata Day, Beqa Fiji, Fijian Firewalking, the Legend Continues.” As part of the narrative embedded in the *sulu*, it is interesting that this particular event extended beyond the Naivilaqata clan members to the whole Dakuibeqa village. Nayacakalou observes in fact that while within one’s village kin ties may not extend to the whole village, on a particular occasion, the application of different principles allow considerable flexibility enabling the people to face both routine and new situations, despite the ‘rigidity’ imposed by the British Colonial administration (Nayacakalou 1975: 23). Similarly, Arno (1993) argues that due to the eclectic nature of *mataqali* formation, kinship terms in Fiji are not a perfect reflection of social reality, as a number of non-agnates might be also included.

Labor and Property among the Naivilaqata’s clan

In his famous study among the Tallensi, Fortes argued that ‘clan ties’ are constituted by a variety of activities and symbols. Clan ties may be based on simple spatial proximity, without any genealogical basis, or on occasional ritual collaboration,

which reflects the larger social organization (Fortes 1945: 96-7; Sahlins 1962: 174), or even on intermarriage. Clans and lineages are not corporate economic units apart from the 'nuclear lineage' (e.g., Samuela Vakuruivalu and his son Waisea Vola) (Fortes 1945: 178), they are not simply a subsystem of kin relations, "but also of economic matters, leadership, authority, social control, attitudes, ideals, values and beliefs" (Sahlins 1962: 6), similarly to the "bundle of rights" Gluckman talks about adapting Sir Henry Maine's definition of property (Gluckman 1965). Hoebel argues that the essential nature of property is to be found in social relations rather than in any inherent attributes of the thing or object that we call *property*. Property, in other words, is not a thing, but a network of social relations that governs the conduct of people with respect to the use and disposition of things (see Hoebel 1966: 424). Strathern shows how in Melanesia the right of ownership associated to property is "a kind of second skin... a world through which people are indefinitely interconnected through the inclusions and exclusions of property relations" (Strathern 2005: 104).

However, property is not a mere relationship between persons and things. Property is a social practice in which people engage. It is a social relationship, inclusive of rights, privileges, powers and immunities which governs the powers legitimized in particular cultural contexts of socially recognized individuals over tangible or intangible things (see Coombe and Herman 2004: 561; Underkuffler 2003: 30; Penner 1997: 2). In Law School we learned that the idea of 'things' is easily discredited by philosophy of law. The idea of property if we have a bunch of coconuts but we are stranded on an uninhabited island does not make any sense. In fact, property becomes meaningful only when human relations, conflicts or claims among people are at stake (Underkuffler 2003:

12). Property rights become one of the most important vehicles for structuring relations of power in a given society (Nedelsky 1993, quoted in Singer 2000: 95).

Chapters 6 and 7 discuss at length how cultural property responds to the need for cultural identity, a sense of significance and reassurance about people's own past. In this sense, kinship relations are determined by relations of property (see Leach 1961). In this context we can say that labor 'creates' property (Gudeman 1986: 11) intended in its practical and productive potentialities (see Goodenough 1978: 30). In the case of the Naivilaqata, I agree with Fortes that we should not think of a lineage just in terms of a "collection of people held together by the accident of birth", but also of an "arrangements of persons that serves the attainment of social and personal ends" (Fortes 1953: 269). Fortes emphasizes the connection existing between lineage or descent structure and the ownership of valued productive property of a given society.

While the *itokatoka* Naivilaqata should be identified as the traditional custodian and proprietary group of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony, their proprietary claim is not exclusive: kindred from other *itokatoka* and *mataqali* of the *yavusa* Sawau participate in the *vilavilairevo* performances and in the distribution of the earnings derived by those performances. Judging from the genealogical record of the Naivilaqata, marriage is in fact normally exogamic, outside the *itokatoka*, the *mataqali* and the village, while marriage within the local *yavusa* is not infrequent. Ravuvu observes how this social and economic change is allowing boys and girls to emerge from their local environs, free to move and search of education and employment, having an opportunity to choose their own marriage partners according to their aspirations and values (see Ravuvu 1995: 6). The next chapter will discuss how the newly introduced forms of Christian religion are

influencing and playing a role in the amalgam of elements of traditional Fijian life in Beqa.

Symmetrically to Sahlin's admirable description of kin group economy (Sahlins 1962: 266), *vilavilavevo* performance revenues are regulated by kindred autonomous economic committees, as dependent segments of the organic village dual economy, which comprises a traditional subsistence farming-and-gathering sector and a modern cash-generating one (see Biturogoiwasa 2001). Hypothetically, these committees have a hierarchical character like that of the family in its own distributive sphere, organizing the distribution of the revenues generated from *vilavilavevo* among the participants and the households, and allocating the rest to a communal fund. Kindred economy is structured by lineage organization, lending the full authority of the *bete* ancestors to grandfathers, fathers, and senior brothers.

This type of economy shows elements of both 'pooling' and reciprocity. The first described by Sahlins as a solidarity form of kindred transaction, consisting in the collection of contributions from all participants to a ritual or ceremony and subsequent redistribution among the community (Sahlins 1962: 195). The second one described by Nayacakalou in form of obligations carried out not for direct reward but addressing mutual social obligations (Nayacaklou 1978: 119). However, Sahlins notes that in kindred group transactions reciprocity actually includes pooling as an adjunct, for reciprocity is indicative of duality and desires of alliance (Sahlins *ibid.*). On the other hand, if pooling implies *per se* social unity, it should be observed that in some cases the redistributive phase is limited to few participants and family members, penalizing the organic village economy.

Bromley and Cernea observe that “common property is in essence ‘private’ property for the group and in that sense it is a group decision regarding who shall be excluded” (Bromley and Cernea, 1989: 14). Without anticipating the discussion on ‘property’ or ‘ownership’ engaged in Chapter 7, Appell’s argument that definitions of property modalities fail not only because they are contradictory and confusing, but largely because they do not distinguish whether the rights are held individually, as a jural aggregate or jural collectivity, is relevant here (Appell 1995: 4). A jural aggregate, like a jural collectivity, is a set of persons each of whom has similar right, either general or special, but it differs from a jural collectivity in that none of its members may act on behalf of or represent the interests of the others (Scheffler 2001: 59). Maintaining a rigorous Weberian approach Fortes writes that “theoretically, [descent groups] are necessarily corporate groups, even if the corporate possession is as immaterial as an exclusive common name or an exclusive cult” (Fortes 1970:111).

Building on this argument, we can say that in principle descent groups, in this case groups constituted on the rule of patrilineation, are perpetual social units, whether or not they exhibit any sort of solidarity or hold any property. They persist for as long as their members (of the appropriate sex) continue to reproduce. They are also jural entities, for their external jural relations persist unchanged despite the continual turnover of their members. Like in Appell’s (1976) description of the Rungus (Borneo) tree-owning unit, The Naivilaqata are a descent group, where rights are held by individuals as a jural collectivity. Among the Rungus all descendants of the original planter have parallel rights to collect the fruit. The descendants living closest to the tree take care of it and maintain prior rights to the first fruits in exchange for his care before they call the other right-

holders to participate in collecting the fruit.

Therefore, like the Rungus, the Naivilaqaata are the caretakers, the ‘custodians’ of the *vilavilairevo*, which they keep fructiferous and strong with their work. The Tui Sawau, the paramount chief of the *yavusa* Sawau, is the head of this ‘corporate group’,²⁴⁰ is the titular ‘owner’ of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony, entitled to give or refuse permission to perform it to old and new groups in consultancy with the *bete levu* (high priest), as clearly stated in this exemplificative extract from my interview with the Tui Sawau:

O ira taucoko na veilawalawa tale, se na veisoqosoqo ko ra vilavilairevo tiko e so e se qai tiko na nodra ituvatuva mera vilavilairevo, e tiko taucoko na nodra sema ni veiwekani ena neitou koro me vaka ga ni vivi na usu, era dau lako mai era mai kerekere, era dau tudei ga vata kei na yaqona, niu dau solia ga na veivakadonui, ni sa soli ga na veivakadonui, ya sa na koya sara ga, ya ga e vinaka kina ni dua ga na isoqosoqo nodratou mai Soliyaga, o Yanuca, na veivanua kece qo era veiwekani kece ga. Ya ga e sega nira vakadeitaka ni, era saumi ena nodra lai vila, ia na sau ni vila e lako kece tiko ga vua na turaga na Tui Sawau.

All groups performing the *vilavilairevo*, have a connection or kin-ties with our village [Dakuibeqa]. They come to us to seek our permission with a traditional offer of *yaqona*. When I give my consent, they are allowed to do it. It is good that there are other groups [not from Dakuibeqa] like those from Soliyaga, Yanuca and so on, for all these groups are related to us. (Ratu Timoci Matanitobua, Tui Sawau, pers. comm.)²⁴¹

Currently, there are five groups from Beqa, approved by the Tui Sawau and the elders in Dakuibeqa, performing *vilavilairevo* on a regular basis²⁴², three in Dakuibeqa D1, D2, D3)²⁴³ one in Naceva (N1) and one in Soliyaga (S1), all part of the *tikina* of

²⁴⁰ Upon this IP-based *sui generis* system discussed in Chapter 7, it is not imperative for traditional communities to be defined as ‘corporations’ or legal persons and have legal personality. The national legislation could be silent in respect of representation requirements, leaving the matter open to all forms of representation.

²⁴¹ Apr. 30, 2005, h.15:00, Samabula, Suva.

²⁴² All the information reproduced below is updated to July 2005.

²⁴³ The letter indicates the village and each group has been assigned a number.

Sawau under the *yasana* of Rewa, Burebasaga confederacy:²⁴⁴

D1		
Village:	Dakuibeqa, Beqa Island	
Committee:	Ratu Timoci Matanitobua, Tui Sawau (Chair) Samuela Vakuruivalu (Secretary) Jovesa Turagabaleti (Treasurer, on leave)	(<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Nakoroqaqa) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata)
<i>Bete</i> ²⁴⁵ :	Samu Vakuruivalu “Small Marika” Tivitivi Pita Tukana Jone Turaga Waisea Vola Timoci Rakavali Sevanaia Waqasaqa Semisi Matawalu Alifereti Kamikamica	(<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata)
<i>Dauvila</i> ²⁴⁶ :	Jolame Dabea Timoci Radaveta Viliame Rokobuli Manasa Baba Mosese Naivalu Manua Laveta Peniasi Rabakewa Uraia Masikula Setareki Vulacadra Eveli Magimagi Eveli Dabea Esala Ratulevu Dabea Poasa Tuituva Atunaisa Tawake	(Any Sawau <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i>)
	Beqa Lagoon Resort, Beqa Island (Tuesdays, 5:30pm ²⁴⁷)	FJD300.00 (+ 1 drum of petrol for the boat) ²⁴⁸
Revenues distribution:	FJD20.00 for each village household (32 total) and establishment of fund.	

²⁴⁴ Burebasaga is the largest of the three confederacies (Kubuna, Burebasaga, and Tovata) comprising Fiji's House of Chiefs, to which all Fijian chiefs belong. It consists of the provinces of Rewa, Nadroga, Serua, Kadavu Island and parts of Ba and Ra. The Roko Tui Dreketi is the Paramount Chief of the Burebasaga Confederacy. Unlike the Kubuna and Tovata confederacies, Burebasaga does not require its paramount chief to be a male, the present *Roko Tui Dreketi* is *Ro Ro Teimumu Vuikaba Tuisawau-Kepa*, who succeeded her late sister, *Ro Lady* Lala Mara.

Table 3.1

D2		
Village:	Dakuibeqa, Beqa Island	
Committee:	Rusiate Rokotavo (Former Chair) ²⁴⁹ “Big Marika” Tivitivi (Secretary) Esala Ratulevu (Treasurer) Epeli Magimagi Aseli Tabuavou	(<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali</i> Naqara/ <i>itokatoka</i> Naivilolo) (<i>yavusa</i> Gonedau/ <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Valeilawa)
<i>Bete</i> :	“Big Marika” Tivitivi “Big Paula” Levulevu Samuela Vakuruivalu Esala Ratulevu Pita Tukana “Small Marika” Tivitivi Timoci Rakavali Waisea Vola Sevanaia Waqasaqa Joseva Rasalato	(<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata)
<i>Dauvila</i> :	Manasa Caucaunitoba Aseli Tabuavou Uraia Masikula Epeli Magimagi Jolame Dabea Ratu Aca Naborisi Poasa Tuituva Manasa Baba Viliame Rokobuli Peniasi Bakewa Mosese Naivalu Manua Laveta Setareki Vulacadra Esala Ratulevu Dabea Epeli Dabea	(Any Sawau <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i>)

²⁴⁵ They do not have to be all present at the performance. If more than one, the oldest assumes the role of *bete* and the other act as regular *dauvila* (firewalkers).

²⁴⁶ Participants come from any *mataqali* within the *yavusa* Sawau. They constantly change and often shift among the other performing groups. This classification wants to represent only a general frame of reference.

²⁴⁷ Day and time may change according to seasonal hotel schedules, minimum guest occupancy, special occasions and holidays.

²⁴⁸ The Beqa Lagoon Resort is conveniently located 20min. of boat from Dakuibeqa.

²⁴⁹ *Bete levu*, died in 2001.

	Marika Naivalu	
Performance location/s and revenues:	Fijian Resort – Shangri-La, Yanuca, Viti Levu (Mondays, Fridays, 6:30pm)	FJD540.00
Revenues distribution ²⁵⁰ :	Village projects, church, ‘women’s club’, MYF ²⁵¹ .	

Table 3.2

D3		
Village:	Dakuibeqa, Beqa Island	
Committee:	Taitusi Vakatawase (Chair) Paula Levulevu (Treasurer)	(<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata)
<i>Bete:</i>	Taitusi Vakatawase Paula Levulevu Jone Turaga Alifereti Kamikamica Rusiate Rokotavo Joseva Rasalato Waisake Ratulolo Pita Koroi	(<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata)
<i>Dauvila:</i>	Timoci Radaveta Josaia Vulacadra Netani Sukanaivalu Akuila Kamikamica Asivorosi Naicovitabua	(Any Sawau <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i>)
Performance location/s and revenues:	Outrigger Hotel, Viti Levu (Tuesdays 6:00pm) The Naviti Resort (Wednesdays 7:00pm) The Hideaway Resort (Thursdays 7:00pm) The Warwick Hotel (Fridays 6:30pm)	FJD440.00 FJD250.00 (if more than 50 guests an additional FJD3.50 per guest) FJD250.00 (if more than 50 guests an additional FJD3.50 per guest) FJD250.00 (if more than 50 guests an additional FJD7.00 per guest)
Revenues distribution:	Not specified	

Table 3.3

²⁵⁰ Source: Esala Ratulevu, Dec. 24, 2004, h. 14:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

²⁵¹ Methodist Youth Fellowship’s fundraising events.

S1		
Village:	Soliyaga, Beqa Island	
Committee:	Ratu Manasa Tavutavukaela (Chair) Pita Kauyaca Qitawa (Treasurer) Anare Veilawa	(yavusa Nacurumoce (Tubarua) <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Nakoroqaqa) (yavusa Nacurumoce (Tubarua) <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Malugu) (yavusa Nacurumoce (Tubarua) <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Muailevuka)
<i>Bete:</i>	Timoci Tabanuqa Anare Veilawa Tevita Delaibatiki Juta Delaibatiki	(yavusa Nacurumoce(Tubarua) <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Mualilavuka) (yavusa Nacurumoce(Tubarua) <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Mualilavuka) (yavusa Tubarua/ <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Bala) (yavusa Tubarua/ <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Bala)
<i>Dauvila:</i>	Pita Kauyaca Rusiate Ratunaua Joseva Qitawa Alifereti Kavurunalase Mateiwai Matanisiqa Mateiwai Vilimoni Qaranivalu Vilikesa	(Any Sawau <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i>)
Performance location/s:	Lalati Resort and Spa (occasional seasonal performances according to holet's occupancy, 6:30pm)	
Revenues per performance:	FJD300.00 (flat rate)	
Revenues distribution:	Village housing project ²⁵²	

Table 3.4

²⁵² Since 2000 (year the Lalati Resort and Spa) opened on Beqa, the revenues from *vilavilairevo* allowed the Committee to deposit FJD3,000 into the Unit Trust of Fiji fund. In the first phase of the project they plan to build ten houses for wedded couples who do not have a house.

N1		
Village:	Naceva, Beqa Island	
Committee:	Rovoame Raicama, Tui Lawaki (Chair) Apenisa Kuruiwaca ²⁵³ Josua Naqatalevu ²⁵⁴ Osea Vakuruivalu ²⁵⁵	(yavusa Kulu <i>mataqali</i> Lawaki, <i>itokatoka</i> Nadawa) (yavusa Kulu/ <i>mataqali</i> Lawaki/ <i>itokatoka</i> Nasecake) (yavusa Kulu/ <i>mataqali</i> Lawaki/ <i>itokatoka</i> Nasecake) (yavusa Kulu/ <i>mataqali</i> Lawaki/ <i>itokatoka</i> Nasecake)
<i>Bete:</i>	Apenisa Kuruiwaca ²⁵⁶ Josua Naqatalevu ²⁵⁷ Osea Vakuruivalu ²⁵⁸	(yavusa Kulu/ <i>mataqali</i> Lawaki/ <i>itokatoka</i> Nasecake) (yavusa Kulu/ <i>mataqali</i> Lawaki/ <i>itokatoka</i> Nasecake) (yavusa Kulu/ <i>mataqali</i> Lawaki/ <i>itokatoka</i> Nasecake)
<i>Dauvila:</i>	Waisea Tava Apenisa Kuruiwada ²⁵⁹ Atunaisa Tawake ²⁶⁰ Tevita n.n. ²⁶¹ Semisi Belo Apakuki Niuvula Tevita Latai Savenaca Nakuro Vilimoni Qarivalu Samu Bureququ “Big Sevanaia” Netani “Small Sevanaia” Netani Seru Kunawalu Anare Vugona Aperama Nauro	(Any Sawau <i>mataqali</i> / <i>itokatoka</i>)

²⁵³ *Vasu* to *mataqali* Naivilaqata.

²⁵⁴ Apenisa’s son

²⁵⁵ Apenisa’s son

²⁵⁶ *Vasu* to *mataqali* Naivilaqata.

²⁵⁷ Apenisa’s son

²⁵⁸ Apenisa’s son

²⁵⁹ Apenisa’s grandchild

²⁶⁰ Apenisa’s grandchild

²⁶¹ Apenisa’s grandchild

Performance location's and revenues:	Royal Davui, Ugaga Island (occasional monthly performances, according to hotel occupancy 7:00pm)	FJD400.00 (+FJD100.00 per petrol) ²⁶²
Revenues distribution:	Village projects	

Table 3.5

While the following two chapters will analyze the formation and subsequent vicissitudes of all these groups, for the purpose of this section, it is relevant to point out that there are three other groups ‘tolerated’ for their relation with the Naivilaqa members, but independent and outside the jural collectivity described above. The main one, which includes two ‘teams’ (Y1, Y2) is from Yanuca Island, the second group (L1), originally from Yanuca split a decade ago with a *bete* moving to Lapanoni, near Pacific Harbour, and the third group (R1) is just what remains of one of Beqa’s most prominent ‘school’ of firewalking from Rukua village.

Y1, Y2		
Village:	Yanuca, Yanuca Island ²⁶³	
Committee:	Tui Daga Lote Raikabula Epeli Mataitini Abaitia Rosivula Masi Voivoi	(<i>yavusa</i> Nukutabua/ <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Nukutabua) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqa)
<i>Bete</i> :	Lote Raikabula Sevanaia Waqasaqa	(<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqa) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqa)
<i>Dauvila</i> :	Y1 Juta Lewanituva ²⁶⁴ Aporosa Dauvucu Mosese Delai Timoci Makoto Cani Tavaqa	(Non Sawau <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i>)

²⁶² Ugaga Island is 20min boat from Naceva village.

²⁶³ Not far from Beqa Island, but grouped in the *yasana* of Serua.

²⁶⁴ In charge of telling the legend of *vilavilairevo* and expolaining the steps of the ceremony to the audience.

²⁶⁵ In charge of telling the legend of *vilavilairevo* and expolaining the steps of the ceremony to the audience.

	Meli Tutudua Sailasa Kaucoka Sakesi Tui Naipoleoni Naisoqovesi Abaitia Rosivula Jovilisi Kacilala “Big Epeli” Mataitini Neimia Ratumemuri Josaia Tubuna Y2 Etonia Doko ²⁶⁵ Abaitia Rosivula Semi Tavailagi Emani Sokosoko Masi Voivoi Asesela Turagadrau Sikeli Rivatiave Manasa Ratumedrue Moses Bati Niko Radiva Maciu Gonevou Viliame Kuruabaki Eliki Waqa “Small Epeli” Mataitini	(Non Sawau <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i>)
Performance location's and revenues:	The Warwick Hotel (Mondays, 6:30pm) Sonaisali Island Resort (Wednesdays, 3:00pm) Sheraton Resort Denarau (Wednesdays, 6:30pm)	FJD500.00 FJD400.00 FJD15.00 per hotel guest
Revenues distribution:	Village projects	

Table 3.6

L1		
Village:	Lepanoni ²⁶⁶ , Viti Levu	
Committee	Jutasa Tikina (Chair) ²⁶⁷	(<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata)
<i>Bete</i> :	Jiu Tikina Rusiate Rokotavo ²⁶⁸ Samuela Vakuruivalu ²⁶⁹ Peceli Vitikitoga ²⁷⁰	(<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata) (<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata)
<i>Dauvila</i> :	Rusiate Rokotavo Samuela Vakuruivalu Peceli Vitikitoga others	(Both Sawau and non Sawau <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i>)
Performance location's and revenues:	Raiwaqa village, (Occasional performances on demand ²⁷¹)	
Revenues distribution:	Not specified	

Table 3.7

R1		
Village	Rukua	
Committee	Not specified	
<i>Bete</i> :	Jonacani Dabea ²⁷² Isimeli Tone Kevueli Moala ²⁷³	(<i>yavusa</i> Naduruvesi/ <i>mataqali</i> Saumua/ <i>itokatoka</i> Rukuruku) (<i>yavusa</i> Naduruvesi/ <i>mataqali</i> Saumua/ <i>itokatoka</i> Rukuruku) (<i>yavusa</i> Gonedau (Vaga)/ <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Valeilawa)
<i>Dauvila</i> :	Jone Ratulevu	
Performance location's and	Naduruvesi (occasional performances) ²⁷⁴	(Both Sawau and non Sawau <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i>)

²⁶⁶ Lepanoni is a recent settlement near Deuba, used by different groups including some Solomon Islanders. Chapter 5 will explain the force majeure that induced Jutasa Tikina and his family to leave Yanuca and relocate there.

²⁶⁷ Jutasa's group dismembered in May 2005, after the Arts Village passed the contract to former Pacific Harbour Cultural Centre *deus ex machina* and firewalking impresario Manoa Rasigatale's *protégé* group, led by Rasigatale's cousin Semi Tavailagi (See Chapter 2, 5).

²⁶⁸ Jutasa's son

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Lionel Danford's 'Discover Fiji Tours' makes the bookings in Navua in conjunction with Navua river 'eco-adventure and Fijian culture experience' tours.

²⁷² He is related to the Tui Sawau. His namesake grandfather, was Samu Vakuruivalu 'big father'.

²⁷³ He was the *bete* in the film "Fiji Firewalkers" discussed in Chapter 5.

²⁷⁴ The choice of this location in the outskirts of Rukua village will be analyzed in the next Chapter 4.

revenues:		
Revenues distribution:	Not specified	

Table 3.8

In addition, there are two groups ‘unapproved’ neither by the Tui Sawau nor by the elders in Dakuibeqa. The first one (T1) is an occasional group with irregular performances around the island of Viti Levu, leaded by Tikiko Korocawiri Vakuruivalu, an illegitimate child of a member belonging to the *mataqali/itokatoka* Naivilaqata of Beqa. The second group (W1) appears more problematic, for its members do not have any cognatic relation with the *mataqali/itokatoka* Naivilaqata. Its members are chosen from different villages on the Coral Coast from its leader, Semi Tavailagi²⁷⁵, who moved from Yanuca Island to Wainiyabia, a village not far from Pacific Harbour on Viti Levu.

T1		
Village	n/a	
Committee	n/a	
<i>Bete</i> :	Tikiko Korocawiri Vakuruivalu	(<i>mataqali/itokatoka</i> Naivilaqata)
<i>Dauvila</i> :	n/a	(Non Sawau <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i>)
Performance location's and revenues:	Occasional performances in resorts and fundraising events around Viti Levu	
Revenues distribution:	n/a	

Table 3.9

²⁷⁵ Semi Tavailagi is a native of Yanuca. Neither his father, Pauliasi Vacamena, nor his mother, Adi Vika Ro Merui from Rewa, are related to the Sawau people. His father's brother is Yanuca's Paramount Chief (Tui Daga) Vanivasa Matia, living now in Wainiyabia. His mother's brother is Manoa Rasigatale, former firewalking impresario at Pacific Harbour Cultural Centre (now renamed Arts Village). The only connection with the Sawau/Naivilaqata would be his wife Mereoni, daughter of Soliyaga's *bete* Timoci Tabanuqa, and thus also his newly born son Pita Ratunivakilele. Semi argues that his great grandfather was related to the Beqa people, and that his wife brings 'strength' to the performance through their newly born son (interview May. 19 2005 h. 12:00, Arts Village, Pacific Harbour).

W1		
Village	Wainiyabia, Viti Levu	
Committee	Semi Tavailagi (Chair)	
<i>Bete:</i>	Semi Tavailagi Meli Tutudua Isoa Labakora (<i>bete liganiwai</i>) ²⁷⁶	Navutulevu village Korovisilou village
<i>Dauvila:</i>	Kustino Kurucirinatoga Epeli Mataitini Jo Ravueta Nimilote Ratudina Manasa Lasaro Sainimoni Bakane	Navutulevu village (Non Sawau <i>mataqali/itokatoka</i>) Navutulevu village (ibid.) Navutulevu village (ibid.) Navutulevu village (ibid.) Naitasiri province (ibid.) Unaniu-Korovisilou village (ibid.)
Performance location's and revenues:	Arts Village, Mon-Sat 11:00am ²⁷⁷	
Revenues distribution:	n/a	

Table 3.10

From the tables above emerges that D1, D2, D3, S1 and N1, the groups part of the Naivilaqata ‘jural entity’, adhere to similar economic rules of solidarity, cohesion and communalism, under which a collective village economy comes into existence—either in production or distribution—under the aegis of the village paramount chief. Durkheim after Comte has shown that the division of labor is something other than a purely economic phenomenon and that its true function is to create between two or more people a feeling of solidarity (Durkheim 1984[1933]). Human history is indeed characterised by the ever-increasing complexity of the ‘natural’ inequality of humanity embodied in the division of labor.

In the *German Ideology* Marx and Engels observe that the form of the division of labor changes passing through a number of distinct phases and stages of development

²⁷⁶ Semi's first cousin.

²⁷⁷ Arts Village Firewalking Show: FJD15.00 per adult, FJD40.00 for family, FJD7.50 per child (6 yrs to 16 yrs), under 6 free (<http://www.artsfactory.com> accessed June 10 2006).

seen as different forms of property. Prior to the rupture of society into classes, the social division of labor was almost exclusively based on kinship relations, within a relatively closed circle. As part of his manifesto for total emancipation, Marx also believed in the possibility of the complete abolition of the division of labor in a communist society “where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity”. Marx believed that “the exclusive concentration of artistic talent in particular individuals, and its suppression in the broad mass which is bound up with this, is a consequence of division of labor... In a communist society there are no painters but at most people who engage in painting among other activities.” (Marx 1965: 45, 443).

Marx’s apocalyptic and solipsistic tone is evoking an essentialist western concept of alienation and a form of reductionism in which class and the division of labor are assimilated to one another (Rattansi 1982: 84). Both Marx and Durkheim give arguments to the effect that division on labor gives rise to cohesion amongst workers in society. However, they disagree on the nature of this cohesion. Marx describes this cohesion as forced upon the proletariat when it has been suppressed to its lowest level and all work has merged into the same type of simple, unskilled, alienated labor. Durkheim, instead of seeing this cohesion as forced upon the worker, sees the rising of solidarity as a positive and necessary part of life in society.

In a traditional Fijian social organization where clans could be the equivalent of classes, or work-groups, and where chiefly aspects of the ruling class are often opposed to those of the *vanua*, the relation between division of labor and kindred remains pertinent. In Fiji, certain specialists, descendants of a particular group or *mataqali* because of their fame may be called upon to practice outside their village. Sahlins

observes that “there are some skills, however, that are not simply family occupations but are considered inherent attributes of entire stocks²⁷⁸ and are practiced by all their local branches” (Sahlins 1962: 354). While Sahlins is mainly referring to Moalan carpenters, in Beqa, the firewalkers descendants of the *bete mataqali* are considered ‘experts in firewalking’ (*dauvila*). Today theirs is just a job, not different from any other specialized job in the village (Susu pers. comm.).²⁷⁹

Bigay’s (1981) analysis of the economic structure changes between precontact time and contemporary Fiji’s global market economy show that division of labor remains fundamental in the Beqan milieu. In the past, the social position of any particular group or *mataqali* was reflected in the specific functions for which that group was responsible. Thus, while all except the *turaga* (chiefs) cultivated the land, all the groups had an exclusive sphere of activity. The *bati* were the traditional warrior class responsible for the defence of the whole group, the *gonedau* provided the chief and the people with fish, the *mataisau* were craftsmen class who built canoes and houses, and the *bete*, the priestly class, acting as intermediaries between the people of living in the village and their *kalou-vu* (ancestral spirits), conducting ceremonies and performing rites in honor of the *kalou-vu*. Elements of this division of labor within a traditional communal system persist to the present day with co-operative units or corporate group like among the *itokatoka/mataqaali* Naivilaqata, a basic village labor, or ‘work unit’, where labor and communal projects are devoted to village development and maintenance.

In this context, firewalking has become a specialized labor activity based on

²⁷⁸ Sahlins uses the term ‘stock’ to identify those categories of people having a common tribal name and claiming agnatic descent from a common ancestor.

²⁷⁹ Wife of *bete* Samu Vakuruivalu. Interview Nov. 30 2004 h. 10:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

descent and kinship relations, which occupies a large part of the communal work in Dakuibeqa and other Sawau villages, where the money raised goes to the village fund rather than the single participants.

In the case of D3, it needs to be clarified that when in the late 1980s Warwick International Hotels²⁸⁰ asked Taitusi Vakatawase's father, *bete levu* Rusiate Rokotavo, to bring *vilavilairevo* to their premises, the Dakuibeqa *dauvila* were already committed with several hotels on Viti Levu. Thus, Rusiate signed up for the job creating a new group which successively became controlled by his sons Taitusi Vakatawase and Paula Levulevu, who currently employ performers from other Sawau villages (mainly Dakuni), but from time to time bring in performers from D1 and D2 (Vakatawase pers. comm.²⁸¹; Ratulolo pers. comm.²⁸²; Levulevu pers. comm.²⁸³), thus distributing only a minimal part to the village fund. Totally independent from Dakuibeqa's village fund are instead S1's and N1's funds. When Lalati Resort and Spa opened in 1990 on the east coast of Beqa, it appeared more logical that Timoci Tabanuqa in Soliyaga provided a group, for the Dakuibeqa *dauvila* would face an inconvenient and dangerous night's navigation to reach the hotel.

Similarly, when in November 2004 the Royal Davui Hotel on Ugaga Island asked Dakuibeqa to perform the *vilavilairevo* ceremony for their guests, Dakuibeqa participated in the 'opening night', bringing in their 'trade mark' performance, but eventually passed the job to their cousins at Naceva, whose village is right in front of Ugaga, regardless of

²⁸⁰ Warwick International Hotels began its association with Fiji with the purchase of the former Hyatt Regency Fiji, now the Warwick Fiji, in December 1979, and the Naviti Resort in 1988.

²⁸¹ Interview Jan. 2 2005 h. 20:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

²⁸² Interview Jan. 11 2005 h. 15:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa

²⁸³ Interview Apr. 22 2005 h. 18:30, Naviti Resort, Viti Levu.

the fact that Naceva had not performed in a decade.²⁸⁴ With several weekly commitments (the Naviti Resort, the Hideaway Resort, the Warwick Hotel, the Beqa Lagoon Resort²⁸⁵ and The Fijian Resort) Dakuibeqa could simply not afford another one, and gladly granted a permission to Naceva with a ceremony before the Tui Lawaki, Naceva's *matanivanua* and about eighteen *mataqali* Naivilaqata members who came from Dakuibeqa, renewing the consent initially given to Apenisa Kuruiwaca, *vasu* to the *mataqali* Naivilaqata, in the late 1960s (Vakuruivalu pers. comm.²⁸⁶; Waqasaqa pers. comm.²⁸⁷; Kuruiwaca pers. comm.²⁸⁸).

Hence, we can say that D1, D2, D3, S1 and N1 are still all part of the same 'jural entity', under the aegis of the Tui Sawau and the *bete* clan of Dakuibeqa, although the proceeds from *vilavilavirevo* are assigned to independent village funds. Employing a *reductio ad absurdum*, also Y1-Y2 and R1, the groups outside the Naivilaqata jural entity 'tolerated' by the Naivilaqata for their unequivocal kindred relation, show identical traits of traditional communal subsistence type.

Firewalking in Yanuca (Y1-Y2) emerged in the 1980s as a response to the demand for better housing, set on the example of the other Sawau villages on Beqa. In Rukua (R1), the first village on Beqa to sign a contract with Korolevu Beach Resort in 1961 the proceeds from firewalking in 1977 amounted to FJD6,200. This communal firewalking income has been used to purchase construction material for village projects. Major communal projects in Rukua included sea walls, completion of land reclamation, installation of electric generators, construction of community halls, co-operative stores,

²⁸⁴ Since the Tradewinds Hotel outside Suva stopped the show in the 1990s.

²⁸⁵ At that time still called Marlin Bay Hotel.

²⁸⁶ Interview Nov. 20 2004 h. 15:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

²⁸⁷ Interview Nov. 24 2004 h. 15:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

²⁸⁸ Interview Dec. 1 2004 h. 12:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

12 cement houses and the building of the new storage tank. Bigay et al. estimated the value of communal labor by evaluating the finished projects and subtracting capital costs, or alternatively, by multiplying the man days of labor by the current wage paid for equivalent construction work in Suva, calculating an overall value of the work undertaken by the Rukuans in 1977 a little over FJD30,000 (Bigay et al. 1981: 129). Nevertheless, the next two chapters will analyze the processes of change, due to religion and tourism influences, that ‘upset’ the traditional subsistence systems in both Yanuca and Rukua villages.

On the other hand, in the case of L1 and T1, the two ‘diasporic’ groups, although they are entitled by descent to perform *vilavilavevo*, they are detached from the jural constitutive rules, rights and duties at the base of their original social group. These two groups represent a sporadic response of the changing economic structure from communal to private economy spurred by the increasing emphasis upon individual production and competition induced by the tourism industry in what Tomlinson calls the the ‘age of money’ (*gauna ni lavo*) (Tomlinson 2004: 191).

Lastly, in the case of W1, who cannot even claim those jural rules, where patrification or even matrification is the necessary and sufficient condition for inclusion in the Naivilaqata jural entity, the next chapters will analyze issues of cultural offense, appropriation, abuse, misuse, misrepresentation, misconception, distortion, including the risks of compromising the Naivilaqaya ‘collective liability’ and their cultural heritage. In a Fijian village context etiquette guides a subordination of personal needs to those of the community. The demonstration of respect for Fijian customs, kinship network and chiefly or senior authority is a central feature governing personal behavior (*inter alia* Becker

1995). The Rungus of Borneo metaphor is relevant here in form of an argument: could the seeds of that tree which has been traditionally protected and grown generation after generation, harvesting and sharing its crops, be transplanted in a foreign garden where anybody could pick and sell its fruits without safeguarding its wellness and integrity usurping ancestral proprietary privileges? While I defer to Chapter 7 for a discussion of issues of kinship and ‘definite concepts’ of property and ownership, in Fiji all and only the members of the patrilineal kin-groups which own the land have a right to plant and to collect wild products such as fruits, building timber and even firewood from it (Nayacakalou 1978: 111).

This section shows that in terms of monetary returns for labor, firewalking is not necessarily the most profitable activity in Beqa and that any material reward is secondary.²⁸⁹ However, the more general point is that “the ceremonial rights and duties of lineages vis-à-vis one another are realized via representative action on the part of one or more of their members” (Scheffler 2001: 96). Bigay et al. already observed that in every other way *vilavilavevo* is the single most important aspect of village life (in Dakuibeqa):²⁹⁰ it is vital to self respect, social solidarity and provides a feeling of cultural identity and of pride in a unique ability. In addition, it has provided opportunities for villagers to travel overseas, and has assured the basic communal income that made the

²⁸⁹ To the figures reported above, especially in tables D2, D3, some costs have be detracted:

\$120.00 for the boat from Beqa to Navua

\$105.00 for the minibus from navua to the hotels

\$12.00/20.00 per participants

\$20.00 for the *yakona* after the performance

\$10.00 Navua community hall (only for D2. Accommodation for D3 is provided by relatives living in Lapanoni settlement)

\$30.00c.a. breakfast, cigarettes, sodas for the trip

²⁹⁰ My addition, for in Rukua, the village object of Bigay et al. study, *vilavilavevo* has declined (See Chapter 4 and 5).

village capital improvements possible (Bigay et al. 1981: 129).

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that the obviously stereotyped layout of the official recorded *yavusa* ‘histories’ (*Tukutuku Raraba*) tries to make explicit that the rationalization of the interrelationship of these social groups is descent. But once the relevance of village work-group organization is perceived, the limits of the administrative model become obvious (see Walter 1978: 353, 365). Crosby observes that in Beqa by looking at the principles by which group relationship are currently and have historically been formed it can be reckoned that the established system is a formalization of a pre-existing system of flexible hierarchies based on alliance and descent (Crosby 1988b: 155).

The currently established system reflects also the formalization of a pre-existing system of groups relating to one another as ‘land’ and ‘sea’. The accounts reproduced above and most Fijian literature seem to point out that a member of the chiefly clan is by definition ‘sea’, while a member of the clan that installs the chief is by definition ‘land’ (or more commonly *vanua*). However it is interesting, as Toren points out, that this classification “is not co-terminous with that which distinguishes chiefly from commoner *yavusa*; thus, while chiefly *yavusa* are always ‘sea’, certain commoner *yavusa* are also ‘sea’” (Toren 1994: 209).

Moreover, drawing on the observations of several fieldworkers (*inter alia* MacArthur 1958; Sahlins 1962; Groves 1963; France 1969; Nation 1978; Walter 1978; Arno 1993; Toren 1990, 1994), the fact that most of the Naivilaqata members are ‘confused’ about the social units to which they have been registered make it evident that

the official model does not reflect established custom. The examples above show that when asked the name of their *itokatoka*, most of the Naivilaqata members were likely to reply with the name of what is officially recorded as their *mataqali*, or vice versa (see Belshaw quoted in Spate 1959: 10; Sahlins 1962: 239; Nayacakalou 1975: 13). The fundamental point is that “much of the confusion about the nature of Fijian social organization has arisen from an initial concern with names and labels of groups rather than with persons and the principles of their association” (Walter 1978: 355; Sahlins 1962: 240).

Like several islands in the Fijian archipelago, Beqa was most likely settled by various peoples acknowledging different origins. These peoples migrated to Beqa independently and settled there at different times. A distinction that could be made is between those immigrant groups who arrived in the more remote past and established the original settlements and those who immigrated more recently and attached themselves to existing settlements (*inter alia* Thompson 1940a; Sahlins 1962; Walter 1978). Beqan people, as discussed in the previous sections, believe that before Christianity they simply lived in ‘groups’ identified by their tribal name (Crosby 1988: 132) , or ‘stocks’ like Sahlins (1962: 295) uses, or ‘phratries’ like Walter (1978: 355) after Thompson (1940a: 32) prefers, possibly ranked by provenance (land or sea) and by office (craftsmen, fishermen, priests etc.). These phratries most likely consisted in unilateral kinship units, exogamous (polygyny was commonly practiced), patrilineal, and patrilocal (see Thompson 1940a: 35).

However, Walter observes that there is no suggestion that the ‘phratry’ is ideally or otherwise reckoned as a patrilineally determined category of people (Walter 1978:

356). Anyway, these phratries were divided and dispersed in descent groups (*mataqali*), which Firth calls ‘ramages’ and Thompson ‘clan’, generally named after the original locality or site where they had settled, by the identity of their founding ancestor, and often by hereditary occupations and offices (fishermen, priests, warriors, craftsmen, etc.). These ramage or clans comprised one or more descent units called *yavusa*, from *yavu* (house –foundation site), thus ‘founder-lineage’ (Walter *ibid.*). The main point is that since their original settlement, the hereditary occupations and occupational designations distinguishing the clans (*mataqali*) should be interpreted as a collective group status. Walter in fact emphasizes the importance of perceiving the basis and relevance of village work-group organization in order to understand group formation through ‘fission’, a phenomenon of descent group organization, and ‘fusion’ a distinct phenomenon of local group organization (Walter 1978: 365).

We have previously discussed that while descent is segmentary and validates privilege, kinship is cohesive and validates collaboration (Groves 1963: 289). In the case of the Naivilaqata, labor plays a tremendous role in defining social relations and their identities. Bodenhorn observes that labor allows individuals not only to earn shares: it enacts kinship. Kinship bonds are renewed through food, labor, ceremonial participation, earned shares, and onomasticon. Obligations of relatedness enacted through labor are clearly social and explicitly moral (Bodenhorn 2000: 143-6). Durkheim had observed that “not only the division of labor exhibit that character by which we define morality, but it increasingly tends to become the essential condition for social solidarity (Durkheim 1984[1933]: 332).

As indigenous Fijians are becoming more adapted to the inevitable force of

business, the modern age of the money (*gauna ni lavo*) envelops everybody (Tomlinson 2004: 191) through tourism and global capitalist economy, while the bonds that attach the individual to his kin, to his native land, to the traditions and to the collective practices of the group become inevitably loosened. However, Tomlinson interestingly observes that as a spatial metaphor, ‘business’ is a path which Indian-Fijians follow (Tomlinson *ibid.*, 1991: 197, 1997: 220; see also Kaplan 1990). Business is also something that is “proclaimed antithetical to things of the *vanua* (meaning ‘land’, ‘common people’, and adjectivally ‘traditional’ things), which are deemed the most important things for indigenous Fijians to retain” (Tomlinson *ibid.*; Williksen-Bakker 2002). More specifically, in western economic and political systems the rights and freedoms of the individuals are “unduly emphasized” (Ravuvu 1983: 106, quoted in Brison 2002: 454; see also Becker 1995).

Hann has recently observed that a primary task for the anthropologist is to document and explore “the preferences that motivate economic action, which most economists simply take as given” (Hann 1998: 31; *inter alia* Appadurai 1986; Humphrey & Hugh-Jones 199; Douglas & Isherwood 1978). The anecdotal introduction to this chapter shows that there is a major difference between traditional Fijian economy and the western capitalistic one. Nayacakalou argues that besides the nonexistence of large accumulation of wealth and complex mechanisms of exchange, in the traditional Fijian traditional economy, motivating factors to work are largely found in the form of social organization. The workers are primarily united by common loyalties and common allegiance. They are controlled and directed by senior members of their group or by chiefs because of their generalized authority, exercised by virtue of social position.

Social factors such as group affiliation based on kinship, rank, factors of residence, public opinion and one's social role play a major role in the organization of economic relations, which summarize in the common expression "*sa nodra lewa na qase*" ('it is the will of the elders') (Nayacakalou 1978: 117-119).

Since the end of the 1970s there has been an increasing dissatisfaction with the imposition of a 'formalist' universal Marxist grid.²⁹¹ Neo-Marxist theories were explicit on the priority they attached to the study of production, but tended to neglect property (Hann 1998: 28). This study adopts a (Durkhemian) 'culturalist'²⁹² approach and aims to surpass any implicit ethnocentrism. This and the next chapters reveal that the duties of the individual to himself and to the society in Fiji are parallel to certain collective sentiments which it is not permissible to offend and to certain collective group status which it is not permissible to usurpate. In addition, the next chapters imply that the study of property, property rules and concepts of ownership, is actually the study of relationships between people (Davis 1973: 157). Thus, autonomous entrepreneurship related to traditional practices (i.e. *vilavilavirevo*) can infringe upon social network solidarity and collective group status consciousness, peaceful and regular labor co-operation, jural personality of the village and kinship moral responsibility.

²⁹¹ Whose followers argue that all economies should be analyzed using the modern economist toolkit, defining economics as the study of utility maximisation under conditions of scarcity.

²⁹² Whose followers argue that the central processes of making a livelihood are culturally constructed, therefore, models of livelihoods and related economic concepts such as exchange, money or profit must be analysed through autoctonous ways of understanding them. Rather than devising universal models rooting in western understandings and using western economic terminologies and then applying them indiscriminately to all societies, one should come to understand the 'local model' and the 'people's own economic construction' (Gudeman 1986) examining people's own conceptualisations or mental maps of economics and its various aspects, i.e. their understanding of concepts such as exchange, property or profit. While conceding that substantivism rightly emphasises the significance of social institutions in economic processes, Gudeman considers any derivational model that claims to be of universal nature, be it formalist, substantivist or Marxist, to be ethnocentric and essentially tautological (Gudeman *ibid.*).

Nevertheless, the next two chapters' focus on the 'agents of change' (Christianity and formal education, tourism and commodification) will reveal that even though in the village milieu Fijian people retain aspects of their existing worldviews, culturalist analysis is becoming complicated by the fact that in an age of globalization traditional cultural expressions are becoming integrated into the global capitalist system and are influenced to conform to western ways of thinking and acting. Local and global discourses are mixing, and the distinctions between the two are beginning to blur.

CHAPTER 4

Agents of Change: Part 1 Christianity and Education

Introduction: Christian Bodies, Unchristian Practices

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
(Genesis 6:5)

Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil. (Jeremiah 13:23 [NIV²⁹³])²⁹⁴

In February 2005 while chatting about the *veli*²⁹⁵ of *vilavilairevo* with Epeli Hau'ofa, he suavely blurted out: “are they *evil*? Why are they considered *tevoro* [evil]? “Christianity has been indigenized” he said “Beqan people might have realigned their beliefs to the Christian religion, but the beliefs are still there” (Hau'ofa pers. comm.)²⁹⁶ Before leaving, he showed me an impressive carving of Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture's artist Paula Liga, who used a 15 foot *vaivai* tree cut down for a road extension near Suva's cemetery. The carving had been recently unveiled to the public. It is like this

²⁹³ The New International Version (NIV) is an English translation of the Christian Bible, one of the most popular of the modern translations of the Bible made in the twentieth century.

²⁹⁴ These two Biblical passages are often used in support of the Methodist doctrine of total depravity (also called total inability or total corruption), a theological construct that derives from the Augustinian doctrine of original sin advocated in many Protestant confessions of faith and catechisms. The doctrine of total depravity teaches that people are by nature not inclined to love God with their whole heart, mind, or strength, as he requires, but rather all are inclined to serve their own interests over those of their neighbor and to reject the rule of God.

²⁹⁵ *Veli*, in general, is a term used to describe fairy creatures or gnomes, often found in the mountainous areas of Fiji.

²⁹⁶ Interview Feb. 15 2006 h. 9:30, USP, Suva.

carving, he said, you cannot take the images of myths and legends it incorporates out of it. Hau‘ofa once wrote: “to deny the relevance of tradition in our lives is to repudiate our sources of knowledge, our cultures, our very selves. It is a prescription for getting lost at sea” (Hau‘ofa 1993: 130).

The topic of the *veli* came up because few weeks before, on January 26, Samu Vakuruivalu, his son Waisea Vola, Bulou Romereani Tuimatanisiga, my student assistant Laisiasa Cavakiqali and I, early after dawn left Dakuibeqa for the upper Namoliwai River region in the interior of Beqa, the acclaimed ‘source’ of the *vilavilairevo*. Mika Tubanavou, my field consultant, was waiting for us in Rukua, for it appeared easier to reach the Namoliwai from the western side of the island (see map Appendix G(v)). Samu had not been back there in over forty years, since his father’s death. Samu’s father, Marika Tivitivi was a *bete levu* of the *vilavilairevo*.²⁹⁷ One day Samu told me that the former Tui Sawau (Ratu Aca Naborisi) asked his father to plant some coconut trees all around the Namoliwai river to mark the boundaries of the Sawau land. His father obeyed, but the *veli* who notoriously dislike coconuts, ‘punished’ him.

*Na nodra tabu na i taukei kei Namoliwai na niu baleta de ra qai ora .
Dua na gauna a lako kina i Namoliwai o tata qai laki tea tu kina e dua na
vuni niu. A mai cavu ga e dua na batina ka mani curuma sara na cancer.
A tukuni vei iratou me ratou lako ga ka kua ni cakava edua na ka.
Ia ko tata qai laki tea tu kina e dua na vuni niu. Ni gauna ga e kila kina o
koya na bete levu sa tukuni sara vua me; laki cavuraka laivi na vu ni niu
koya. Ia qai muri ya ,au kila ni sa saumi vei tata na nona laki tea tu na niu
ki Namoliwai. E kania sara ga na vuni batina taucoko kei na galegalena
ka mani vakavuna sara na nona mai yali na noqu qase.*

There is a taboo regarding coconuts for the *i taukei* (land owners) of Namoliwai, because they might choke from eating them.²⁹⁸ One day my

²⁹⁷ See section on the succession of the *bete levu* in Chapter 3.

²⁹⁸ According to Apenisa Kuruiwaca, the *balabala* (tree fern, *Cyathea lunulata*) is the only tree growing well around the Namoliwai for it is the *veli*’s favorite, while they dislike the coconut’s

father went to Namoliwai and he planted a coconut tree there. My father was actually told to just go, but not to do anything. But he went and planted a coconut shoot. When the *bete levu* (high priest of firewalking) [Semi Raikadra] found out, he told my father to immediately dig the shoot out. However, later on I realized that my father was being punished for planting the coconut in Namoliwai. One of his teeth was pulled out, and then cancer got him. It ate up his entire teeth and jaw, and this was the cause of the death for my father. (Vakuruivalu pers. comm.)²⁹⁹

While I refer to the images contained in *The Sawau Project* for a full account of our trip up to the Namoliwai, our boat ride back to Dakuibeqa was also quite eventful. The fast fiber boat that had taken us to Rukua in less than thirty minutes in the morning, took more than twice the time to get back in the evening. The boat captain was perplexed. The boat was making headway, but nothing was wrong with the outboard motor. After dropping Laisiasa at Sese's plantation, where he was spending the night with some kin, the boat seemed to have a new life, and we sped back to the village.

While Laisiasa's weight could not justify the unusual boat 'heaviness', Samu explained to everybody that the reason was that all the *veli* took our visit—the first in so many years—as an occasion to leave their *koro* (village) at Namoliwai and to follow the *bete* (Samu) back to Dakuibeqa. But when they spotted the smoke at Sese they all ran to find out if there was a *vilavilarevo* going on.³⁰⁰ Back to Dakuibeqa, the topic was on everybody's mouth while we were sipping tea. Samu was telling the story over and over

white juice for it resembles male and female seminal fluids. (pers. comm. Nov. 15, 2004 h. 19:00, Naceva). In Apenisa's account the *veli* specifies that "*Kakua ni vaka niu de keimami na ora baleta ni keimami mataivalu gone lalai*" (It [the *qalu* for the *madrali*] should not contain coconut for we might choke from it) (pers. comm. *ibid.*).

²⁹⁹ Interview Jan. 26 2005 h. 12:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

³⁰⁰ It is a common belief that the *veli* are attracted by any smoke. In Apanisa Kuruiwaca's words, the Tui Namoliwai, the chief of the *veli*, told Tui Qalita "*Na vanua taucoko e dau kuvu kina na buka keimami dau raica se buka ni cava. Ke buka ni Vilavilarevo keimami na tiko kina*" (For every smoke that we see, we try to detect its purpose. If the burning of firewood is meant for *vilavilarevo* we stick to it) (pers. comm. Nov. 15, 2004 h. 19:00, Naceva).

again before going to sleep. However, the real surprise came the next morning. Poasa Raisele, a farmer at Sese, arrived lamenting a sleepless night for the *veli* ‘camped’ with them all night not letting them sleep. When he, his wife and kids tried to get some sleep, they felt like someone was ‘holding’ them, ‘pulling’ their legs and arms from their beds. At this point, Samu (like Semi Raikadra did in 1972)³⁰¹ told Poasa to command the *veli*: *Ni liu wani* (take the lead), back to their *koro* (Namoliwai) (Vakuruivalu pers. comm.)³⁰²

When I casually recounted the incident to a prominent Methodist official over a cup of tea one morning at the Epworth House in Suva, I think I received the same look Pascal Boyer received over dinner in a Cambridge college from a prominent Christian theologian after mentioning about Fang’s people belief in flying witches, who told him: “This is what makes anthropology so fascinating and so difficult too. You have to explain *how people can believe in such nonsense*.” (Boyer 2001: 297). In fact, I was tempted to emulate Boyer’s polite reply: that the Fang too were quite amazed when first told that three persons really were one person while being three persons, or that all misfortune in this vale of tears stemmed from two ancestors eating exotic fruit in a garden (Boyer *ibid.*)³⁰³

The following sections present the argument that although not entirely the moral code a society derives from, or is supported and sanctioned by religion, the spiritual and the moral are deeply conjoined (*inter alia*, Kant 1998[1793]; Tylor 1958[1871]; Tiele 1979[1897]; Durkheim 1995[1912]; Freud 1952[1913]; Malinowski 1984[1925];

³⁰¹ See introduction in previous chapter.

³⁰² Jan. 27, 2005, h. 18:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

³⁰³ For the emerging Pentecostal churches, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God and one *person*, rather than one God in three persons as in the doctrine of the Trinity. In Fiji churches like United Pentecostal Church International views the trinitarian concept of God as scripturally ‘incorrect’, compromising the biblical teaching of God as one.

MacIver & Page 1949; Eliade 1959; Nottingham 1971; Geertz 1973; Barnes 1984; Levy, Mageo & Howard 1996; Boyer 2001; Barker 2004). Early researchers in Oceania like Firth realized immediately that from an emic point of view the shift between paganism and Christianity was conceived by the indigenous communities as a moral 'evolution' of their faith within the journey of amending 'barbarous customs', rather than a 'revolution' per se, tended to the correction of 'amoral' traditional beliefs through Christian morality (see Firth 1970: 315).

Certainly there are differences between contemporary globalization and the early spiritual phenomenon that changed Fiji in the 19th century. However, the agency implicit in the bubbling western 'metaculture of newness' conveyed by Methodism, Evangelicalism and more recently Charismatic-Pentecostalism helped reinforce the intercontinental consciousness of individual humility before God, defining a novel characteristic of globalization. Thus, the transition from *butobuto* (darkness) to *rarama* (enlightenment) in Fiji is perceived with a sense of cultural continuity, a sense of identity with a 'global' Christianity (*inter alia* Clossey 2006; Urban 2001; Tomlinson 2002a).

In this context, the example of *vilavilaverevo* indexes how religious cosmopolitanism challenges local beliefs and practices (see Giddens 2000, 1990; Davidson 2004; Newland 2004; Tomlinson 2004a; Robbins 2004; Brison 2002). Paraphrasing Epeli's advice, the belief in ancestors, spirits and gods is still very much alive and is not incompatible with modernization. They are regarded as simply staying 'quiescent', immobilized by the missionaries (see Firth 1957[1936]: 45). However, these beliefs occasionally enter again the mind of the community, especially when the community is confronting inexplicable events, domestic disturbances, illness, misfortune

and suffering.

Methodism, Hierarchy and *Mana*

The anecdotal account presented in the previous section reveals that although the Pacific Islanders have long been dominated by western interests, their cultures often remain oriented to indigenous traditions and ideologies. In other words, to form an authentic part of their religious experience, Christianity must enter into their local ethos, world-views, aspirations and concerns within their particular socio-historical circumstances (Barker 1990: 2). In 1854, Cakobau converted to Wesleyan Christianity, styling himself Tui Viti (king of Fiji) with British Methodist missionary support, “thereby placing himself in a relationship with the powerful Christian god and gaining military assistance of the Christian King of Tonga” (Kaplan 1990: 129). The *bure-kalou* (god-houses) were taken down, major deities destroyed and quickly replaced with Wesleyan Christian faith and churches.

Mutatis mutandis, in Fiji we denote what Davidson calls the ‘universal’ application of the doctrine of “*cuius regio, eius religio* (as the King, so the religion)” to the Pacific islands hierarchical and chiefly society (Davidson 2004: 138). Although the conversion of Cakobau did not lead quickly and automatically to the acceptance of Christianity throughout Fiji, the politico-economical projects between Cakobau and the Europeans enabled the centrality of Christian faith which paralleled and implemented the centralization of power in the hands of the Europeans. Methodism remains the nation’s largest Christian denomination,³⁰⁴ though Catholicism and other Christian religions are

³⁰⁴ Methodist Church comprising 36% of the total population, including 66% of indigenous

quickly growing especially in the urban milieu. As a result, since the late 1950s no indigenous Fijian professed or admitted to follow traditional Fijian religion anymore. However, similarly to Hau‘ofa’s intuition, Nayacakalou observes that “there are still clear traces of belief in the supernatural beings once held to influence the affairs of the men” (Nayacakalou 1975: 92).

Therefore, the question appears to be: how and to what extent is Methodism accountable for the cultural changes in Fiji? After all, Methodism has followed in Oceania the path of indulgence and compromise, giving up restrictions on tobacco and *betel* in the North Pacific and tobacco and *kava* in the South, with the result that in Fiji any religious event is accompanied by libations of *yaqona*. Obviously, the Methodist Church introduced something more than a ‘new cultural system’ in Fiji. It introduced the confidence in a new hierarchical system, equipped with a structure and organization germane to the Fijian *vakavanua*, re-inventing tradition *ad hoc* to indigenous Fijian narratives and social life.

The Methodist church along with other non-congregational Christian churches are characterized by a hierarchical polity recognizing different kinds of power at different levels of the church, resulting in imposing a strong organization at national and village level. While democratic rules are stressed, Takayama and Sachs observe that the norms and the constitutions of the hierarchical denominations (Episcopal and Presbyterian) “support a system of ‘connectional’ government which emphasizes authority and position (Takayama and Sachs 1976: 270). The Methodist Church has an Episcopal structure with local congregations and governing boards controlling several aspects of the

Fijians (Ame Tugaue pers. comm., Apr. 27, 2005 h. 9:30, Epworth House, Suva).

congregational life.³⁰⁵ This structure is reflected in the subordination of younger people to those who gained wisdom through mastery of a body of traditional knowledge as Brison observes, requiring the younger theological students to progress through a series of grades in order to gain prominence in the church (Brison 2002: 459).

In Dakuibeqa and the other Sawau villages, while men belong to the Men's Fellowship, young men are strongly encouraged to join the MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship, *Mataveitokani*), which periodically holds special events around the Sawau villages' parishes. This way, MYF's young men and women become accustomed to the hierarchical structure and obligations. Waisea Vola, Samu's 27 year old son, has been recently nominated coordinator for the MYF group of Dakuibeqa. This appointment obliges him to attend meetings in the neighbor villages and also in Suva, requiring him to develop speech ability and representational and organizational skills dealing with other MYF members and church officials.

Nayacakalou observes that the Methodist church hierarchy is similar to the Fijian administrative hierarchy but somehow divergent. One essential difference is that "at every point a church official holds his position without any reference to his traditional position in society; chiefs and commoners may hold any of these posts and their social status makes no difference as far as the church is concerned" (Nayacakalou 1975: 93). He does not need not to be tied to any particular village or area, or be a member of the lineage or political group of the members of his congregation. If he is, Nayacakalou notes, it is quite incidental (Nayacakalou *ibid.*). The *talatala* (minister) holds his position independently from his personal social status, clan affiliation and kin relations. However,

³⁰⁵ The Methodist Church in Fiji originally organized itself in 13 circuits, reflecting the major provincial areas of Fiji, and subdividing circuits into sections (Thornley 1995: 39).

it is inevitable that where he is from has some effect on how he is expected to interact with the local community.

One of the questions I posed to the Methodist church officials, *talatala*, and students at Davuilevu Methodist Theological College, was to what extent their sermons and preaching should be informed and inspiring in regard of the traditional cultural expressions of their assigned parish.³⁰⁶ I found this question particular relevant given the fact that in a Fijian village the group tends to ‘recruit’ and embody members from the outside. Thus, though these local pastors are in the village for a limited period of time only, Nayacakalou observes that after they live with a descent group, which obviously they are genealogically unconnected with, they are taken in by the group and treated as members of it (Nayacakalou 1975: 17).

Dakuibeqa’s current *talatala*, Semisi Narovini, was appointed in 2004, and is the fourth resident *talatala* in the village since 1993, replacing his predecessor who was in Dakuibeqa only for twelve months. Before that date there was only one itinerant *talatala* for the whole island, based in Naiwaisomo (Raviravi district), periodically visiting both Sawau and Raviravi villages. I noticed that Semisi occasionally accompanies the *dauvila* to Sigatoka during their performances at the Fijian Resort, where he joins them in a prayer to God³⁰⁷ after the performance, which has replaced the *madrali* the elaborated

³⁰⁶ The assignment comes directly from Methodist Church headquarters, Epworth House, Suva.

³⁰⁷ “*Kemuni saka na Kalou, kemuni saka na Kalou na turaga dau veivakaraautaki, na kalou sa vakavuna na ka kece ga, na Kalou sa vakarautaka na ka kece ga, sa nomuni na isolisoli kece ga, keimami buli me keimami vakayacora na veika ni lomamu ni, me vakayacora na isolisoli ogo ena itavi, ni solia vei keimami, keimami sa cabeta bula mai e dai, sega ni dua na mavoa e yaco, keimami sa vakavinavinaka vei kemuni ni keimami sa rawata na ka kece ga, ena vukui Jisu Karisito koya sa vakaukauwa taki keimami, tautaunaki na ilakolako, na lori na draiva, me maroroi keimami me yaco ena vanua keimami lai vaka itikotiko kina, ni bokoca na neimami valavala ca, vakasavasavataki keimami ena nomuni dra, cuva ka masu ena kerekere, yaca I Jisu na neimami soro ka neimami vakabula. Emeni*” (Esala Ratulevu, May 19, 2005, Hideaway

thanksgiving ceremony, described in Chapter 2, signaling the closing of each *vilavilairevo* performance ceremony. Semisi in fact arrived in Dakuibeqa in 2004, *after* the banning of the *madrali* in consequence of the *veivakasavasavataki*, a three month long daily process of ‘cleansing’ that took place between October 1, 2002 and January 1, 2003.

While the word *veivakasavasavataki* is commonly used in Dakuibeqa’s narratives, to signal the end of an era, and consequently the end of the *madrali*, Methodist officials in Suva prefer to use the expression *veivakavoui vakayalo kei na vevakaduavatataki* (spiritual renewal and reconciliation). Reverend Manasa Lasaro, former President of the Methodist Church in Fiji,³⁰⁸ who participated in the three day long closing of the *veivakasavasavataki*, explained to me that the whole process of ‘renewal’ culminates in a three day seminar at the presence of the chief, all the leaders of the church, all the leaders of the women’s groups and of the local youth groups. The seminar, lead by Methodist Church high officials Manasa Lasaro and Ame Tugaue³⁰⁹, and Dakuibeqa’s former *talatala* Maikeli Livani, included long hours of praying, bible reading, fasting, abstinence from *yaqona* and tobacco, refreshing the renewal steps achieved in the previous three months. Reverend Lasaro explained to me that the Church’s role in Dakuibeqa was:

To help the people to re-look and to reflect about their traditional customs and re-existence say for instance the case of *vilavilaireirevo*... I mean, that’s an old belief system which they believe was given to them by their own ancestors, and part of the ritual is that they worship their own gods, the ghosts, and small people [*veli*], part of that is the process of the

Resort, h. 19:30).

³⁰⁸ Currently Director of Christian Citizenship and Social Services of the Methodist Church, Reverend Lasaro addresses conflicts between people holding different political views, disputes between traditional rights and historical rights over land tenure, and racially based conflict. Especially since the 2000 political coup Reverend Lasaro has been heavily involved in peace-building and reconciliation within Fiji.

³⁰⁹ General Secretary of the Methodist Church.

vilavilavairovo, part of that process is worship [*madrali*]...
(Lasaro pers. comm.)³¹⁰

Reverend Lasaro remembered that he encountered discordant opinions among some members of the Naivilaqata clan during the closing seminar in Dakuibeqa:

[Some of them] were afraid to let go the traditional worship [*madrali*] of the small people [*veli*]... because they were afraid of getting burned [performing the *vilavilavairovo*]... The church has got to look at the way in which tradition has molded the life of the Fijian people... it has to look at the darker side of the ritual and try and portrait the brighter side of it... a lot of them are afraid to let go the past, they are afraid, so you need that educational process, you can't just tell them stop, you need to educate them, to actually to realize this is, this is tradition, this is myth, and this is reality. (Lasaro *ibid.*)

An alleged 'darker side' and 'curse' associated to the *vilavilavairovo* ceremony emerges more clearly in my interview with Reverend Ame Tugaue, who joined Reverend Manasa Lasaro and Reverend Maikeli Livani in Dakuibeqa in December 2002 for the final week dedicated to praying and fasting.

I went there [Dakuibeqa] by the request of Manasa Lasaro and Livani, ok... knowing that in some places in Fiji, some believe, ok... either from the Methodist Church or the Catholic Church... what ever Christian denomination they belong to, they think that there are certain things or elements in life, or some kind of beliefs that are still, you know, practiced or observed within the community or society, that is the cause for them of not receiving the blessing from above, ok, failing them to have better developments, for better civilization... they try to see where does the root of all these problems still lies, they keep on searching, searching, searching, they bring one *talatala*, another *talatala*, they try this, they try that, even in some places, they tend to put the blame on those who live there, before them... they were the cause, ok... and the curse is still alive in that piece of land, on that area, that is the ruin in the life of their generation until today, but it's important to escape to avoid from that curse, some thing has to be done, some they take the, what's that... the grave and bring out the bones of those people who died, because they are the one who performed witchcraft here, ok... they are the ones who

³¹⁰ Interview May 3 2005 h.10:30, Epworth House, Suva.

worshipped evil spirit here, they were the one who did this bad things and the curse falls on the ground and those who grow up on that piece of land, cannot run away from that curse, that is the... and some they dig the soil, ok... the soil that belong to that clan or that tribe, they dig the soil they take to church and pray to God... yeah, they take the soil to church and pray God to bless the soil so that the soil can be forgiven, those who live on that soil at that time will have the blessing from above... the curse falls on the ground, so they bring the ground to God... in some places some they bring trees, some they bring grass, anything that is on the ground ok... but when I came there, *veivakasavasavataki*, means the cleansing or sanctification in English, I told them if you want try reconciliation to God, true sanctification, true cleansing, don't bring the bones, don't bring the soil, don't bring the earth or any other creation, take you, yourself to Jesus Christ, your lord and savior, because you are the most important creation, of all the creation. (Tugaue pers. comm.)³¹¹

In Reverend Tugaue's narrative we find the combination of the two key elements of 'curse' and 'soil', which are becoming more and more recurrent in the ethnographies of anthropologists who conducted their fieldwork in Fijian rural communities. When a young man in his twenties with a slightly bruised back lies in bed all day, numb, unable to walk, Katz rethinks about the refrain he has been hearing so many times in his village "There is sickness in the land" (Katz 1993: 251). Arno writes that in Lau "an important associated belief is that many misfortunes and illnesses are the direct result of misdeeds... *Lega*, misfortunes of all kinds, are linked to social control through this system of supernatural punishment" (Arno 2004: 32). Tomlinson observes how in the Tavuki Bay area (Kadavu) source of difficulties (ill health, unhappy family situations, or lack of desirable employment) "often turn to the past. Specifically, non-Christian ancestors are blame for 'cursing' the present. Chain prayers (*masu sema*)³¹² are rituals conducted by Methodist ministers ostensibly to defuse such dangers from the past...

³¹¹ Interview Feb.17 2005 h.12:00, Epworth House, Suva.

³¹² Tomlinson notes that "they are called 'chain prayers' because people pray, individually or in teams, at one or more prayer sites, while other participants rest at another site or sites" (Tomlinson 2002: 248).

Chain prayers are unique ritual events that make the potency imbued in the soil, specifically the soil of house foundations, both intelligible and palpable for participants” (Tomlinson 2002: 248). Similarly, Becker observes the relocation of ‘illness’ in the community of Nahigatoka , manifested in misfortune, failure to thrive, odd adversities and suffering attributed to supernatural forces (see Becker 1995: 112).

In November 2003 the news of an elaborate act of atonement performed by the members of the remote village of Nabutautau in the interior of Viti Levu, made quickly the first page of the local and international press. The descendants of the people who cannibalized Reverend Thomas Baker,³¹³ believing that they were suffering, remaining impoverished and unprosperous from a curse because of the actions of their forefathers, after consulting with Methodist Church officials invited the late Reverend’s descendants for a formal *mea culpa* “to be free of the bondage”³¹⁴ at the presence of Fiji's former Prime Minister, Laisenia Qarase and of members of the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga* (Great Council of Chiefs).

The ritual culminated in a symbolic Holy Communion accompanied with the offering of cows, specially woven mats and thirty carved *tabua* to the Australian descendants of Reverend Baker. In a curious reversal of fortune, it should be noticed that the remote village of Nabutautau immediately gained the attention of adventurous trekkers embarking in a twelve hours hike to reach “the remains of old villages where their cannibal-forefathers once lived... walk[ing] the same tracks as Thomas Baker, the missionary who was infamously killed by the Fijians in the 1800s and then

³¹³ Reverend Baker, from the London Missionary Society, was killed and cooked by the people of Navatusila on 21 July, 1867, after he took a comb out of chief Nawawabalavu’s hair.

³¹⁴ Ratu Filimoni Nawawabalavu, namesake of his ancestor (*Pacific Magazine*, Jan. 2004: 6).

cannibalized.”³¹⁵ On the other hand, it should be more carefully observed that these rituals of atonement and apology are emblematic in what Tomlinson calls the ‘culturally generative’ confrontation between *lotu* (in the form of the Methodist minister) and *vanua* (in the form of ancestors’ potency located in the soil), an interactive friction where at the end the former claims supremacy bringing light to the darkness of heathenism (Tomlinson 2002: 248, 251), mostly through the confession of the sinners:

All of them [Dakuibeqa people], they confessed, they take it to themselves that they are also sinners, ok... the chief [the Tui Sawau, Ratu Timoci Matanitobua], the chiefly clan the *bete*’s clan... the spokesman clan... they also know that they have their weakness, their problems to confess about, so that’s why, they all came to... the chief confess to all of them, this clan confess to the chief and the clan, they all confess to one another after everything was done, we all went to the church to confess to God, all to confess to God, who is the head of all the clan. (Tugaue pers. comm.)³¹⁶

The Tui Sawau, Ratu Timoci Matanitobua participated in the *veivekasavasavataki* interpreting the desire of his late brother, the Ratu Peceli Vitaukitoga—he had been suddenly called to replace—and the whole village of Dakuibeqa:

I think this [the idea behind the *veivekasavasavataki*] was after my brother [former Tui Sawau, Ratu Peceli Vitaukitoga] died³¹⁷... but before he died I think him and *talatala* Livani, they had a talk regarding this, it’s not only regarding the *vilavilairevo* but the whole community... what our forefathers did and because they [Ratu Peceli and Reverend Livani] were saying that our kids were not doing well in school and they thought it was a curse for the village because what our great-great fathers did, so they... what they proposed for us... to do the cleansing [*vievakasavasavataki*]. So after he [Ratu Peceli Vitaukitoga, Tui Sawau] died we decided to fulfill that wish. (Tui Sawau pers. comm.)³¹⁸

³¹⁵ FijiBure.com (<http://www.fijibure.com/treks/walks.htm> accessed July 4 2005).

³¹⁶ Interview Feb.17 2005 h.12:00, Epworth House, Suva.

³¹⁷ Ratu Peceli Vitaukitoga passed away in July 2002.

³¹⁸ Interview Apr.30 2005 h.15:00, Samabula, Suva.

It is clear that the 2002-2003 *veivakasavasavataki* involved a series of Methodist rituals cleansing for three months past deeds and present beliefs, related or unrelated to the *vilavilatrevo*, mending Dakuibeqa's people from the soil to the soul. This incident is vaguely reminiscent of Manzoni's version of the epidemic contained in his famous novel, *I Promessi sposi* (*The Betrothed*). During the plague of 1630 in Milan, it was widely thought that *untori* ('anointers') making pacts with demons in exchange for plague unguents went about the city deliberately spreading the infection. This popular myth illustrates both the fear and paranoia that accompanied the plague in early modern times on the one hand, and on the other the Church's complex web of influence beginning to fray.

Although I do not intend to juxtapose the three month *veivakasavasavataki* process occurred in Dakuibeqa to the sermons reserved to the quarantined plague-stricken in Milan's Lazzaretto, it appears to be a standard procedure in Fiji to confine and root out 'contagious' beliefs or disbelief starting from the soil, not just in Dakuibeqa. At the root of the problem, is that every belief, even the historical, is indeed 'rational'. Kant makes a persuasive case for writing that "no one can *first* be convinced of the existence of a highest being through any intuition; rational faith must come first..." (Kant 1998[1793]: 11, 13).

Fijians encountering European civilization (through metal tools, muskets, gun powder which they associated to divine power) believed that the Christian God was true (*dina*) (see Hashimoto 1989: 7). While belief in the 'truth' of Wesleyan Christianity with its polity and morality became a virtue, the

introduction of trade in foreign goods like muskets, gun powder provided a ‘rival force’ for the identification and possession of *mana*, making the Fijian chiefs believe that white man’s God had more powerful *mana* than their own gods (Thompson 1940: 112; Tuwere 2002: 139).

Fijian theologian Reverend Ilaitia Tuwere brings the example of the lament of the rebellious and defeated Ratu Mara after the battle of Kaba on 7 April 1855, won by Cakobau, freshly converted and strong of the support of King Taufa‘ahau³¹⁹, his nephew Mau‘fu and of their (Christianized) Tongans warriors: “*O koya ga e lialia e via vala vata kei ira na kai Toga. O ira qori era sega ni tamata, era kalou.*” (Only a fool will want to fight the Tongans. These people are not men, they are gods.) (Tuwere 2002: 139-40). Fijian Christian rhetoric uses the battle of Kaba to mark the point where western Fiji turned away from the old dark days adopting the customs of the more enlightened people.

Despite the fact that Wesleyan ministers seemed to bring a strong *mana*, yet they were peaceful; they condemned many local customs, yet they offered a friendly magic centered in puzzling little books (Garrett 1982: 109), *mana* became rationalized, *dina* (true),³²⁰ according to the new Wesleyan canons. According to Tuwere, the communal request for the blessing of the gods, or ancestors: *mana! E dina* (power! It is true) is the liturgical equivalent of the Christian ‘Amen’.

³¹⁹ Taufa‘a hau King George Tupou I of Tonga visited Fiji in November 1853 in company of Robert Young, a deputationist from the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Great Britain sent to take over the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist mission coordination in the Pacific, urging Cakobau to become a Christian. Subsequently, on March 24, 1855 Taufa‘a hau arrived with a large fleet and two thousand warriors to rendezvous with Cakobau’s troops (Garrett 1982: 113, 114; Derrick 2001[1946]: 113).

³²⁰ Tomlinson observes that ‘truth’ and ‘efficacy’, or ‘potency’, are often conflated in Fiji. In an account collected by Hocart, the informant says: “if it is true (*ndina*) it is *mana*; if it is not true, it is not *mana*” (Hocart 1914: 98, quoted in Tomlinson 2002: 253).

According to Tuwere, the *mana* concept “bridges the gulf between *vanua* and *lotu*: the former with its focus on place and the image of the sacred, the latter with emphasis on time, conversion, and change” (Tuwere 2002: 136, 137).

However, drawing on Tomlinson, I observe that this emphasis on time results instead in a metacultural dichotomy, a degradation of the present age despite the Christian conversion. *Mana* remains associated to a certain spirituality and power associated to the past age. “People read the loss of *mana* in various signs: disordered kinship relations, illegitimate political authority, too much kava drinking, and so on” (Tomlinson 2002b: 39-40). After all, did not Tuwere realize an implicit dichotomy in his *Thinking Theology Aloud in Fiji*?

The spirituality that the church teaches in present-day Fiji is dualistic: one side belongs to the *vanua* and the other belongs to Christianity. This creates a false dichotomy between the spiritual and the physical. In the process human beings are divided. Protest against this is voiced in the form of the continuing presence of sorcery and related phenomena... Christian spirituality must not only be concerned with the soul; it must also take account of the environment. Here Fijian spirituality can retrieve what has been lost through misuse and misunderstanding (especially by Western importers of modernization. (Tuwere 1987: 152)

Insightful is also the perspective of Reverend Savenaca Vuetanavanua, a third year student at Davuilevu Methodist Theological College, at the time of our meeting working on a thesis on *vilavilavirevo*. Interestingly, he is married to a woman from Raviravi village, related through her father’s family from the neighboring Sawau village of Rukua to the *mataqali* Naivilaqata. Reproduced hereby is an excerpt from the transcription of our conversation³²¹:

Q: Have you had a chance to watch a *vilavilavirevo* ceremony?

³²¹ Interview Mar. 5 2005 h. 13:30, Davuilevu, Methodist Theological College.

A: Last year [2004] I went to the Fijian Hotel to witness myself the firewalking ceremony... I arrived at the hotel before 3 o'clock in the afternoon and I was there at the site where we prepare the *lovo*, the pit, and we lit the *lovo* at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and the *Vila*[*vilairevo*] was performed at 6:30 in the afternoon, so the whole duration the *lovo* was lit for was three and a half hours. Then we went to a small *bure*... the priest [*bete*] is there with few villagers who accompany him who are taking part in the firewalking... and after they distributed the *balabala* leaves, after that a short prayer and we left the *bure* to the *Vila*[*vilairevo*] site...

A: What kind of prayer...?

Q: A short prayer, that is now a substitute for what they used to do before [*madrali*]... before no prayer, there not used to be a prayer... Usually there are some sort of *tabus* [sic], you might have known that, sexual intercourse, they're forbidding from that and also they're forbidden to eat the salt, and also the coconut milk... and also they should try to, to abstain from any conflict, walk away from any conflict, if there are involved in any conflict of any sort it will have some impact on the firewalkers, they can get burned and something like that...

Q: How is your study looking at *vilavilairevo*?

A: My focus now... biblically we used to feed on two sources: Scriptures and tradition, but I'm thinking about *vila*[*vilairevo*] as an alternative, as a vehicle, as a carrier, where as a way the gospel should be transmitted in Fiji's present context... so that's my view.

Q: How do you relate tradition and gospel in this case?

A: You cannot allow the *vila*[*vilairevo*] to stand alone, you should allow the *vila*[*vilairevo*] to be part of the tradition, holistic approach... Holistically... I mean you have to include all part of tradition, some sort like a knot it just ties them together, which leads up to the *vila*[*vilairevo*]... The Fijian word that I'm using is *mana*... if you want to follow *mana* you can place *mana* to every Fijian ceremony... I see *vila*[*vilairevo*] as another manifestation of *mana*. *Vilavilairevo* is good for this community—holistic approach thinking it as a 'whole'... we have to see *mana* in relation to other Fijian effects the tradition, the culture... that's the [implicit] *mana* of *vilavilairevo*... Paul [Geraghty]³²² prefers to use the word *sau* for *mana*... maybe *sau* is the primary road, *mana* is the secondary road...

Q: Do you think traditional Fijian *mana* can go together with Christianity?

A: If not, you have to question *why* can she [pointing at his wife] heal burns³²³!?

Q: So, this gift [*vilavilairevo*] is also a God given gift?

³²² Reverend Vuetanavanua told me he met Prof. Paul Geraghty and also Prof. Asesela Ravuvu for advice in December 2004.

³²³ All the Naivilaqata kindred have the gift of healing burns.

- A: Of course, I believe so! God is not new to Fiji, I mean, it comes from deity, our forefathers use to worship deities... The Christian God manifested himself before Christianity came to Fiji, he was here before, that's why I can believe...
- Q: How would you explain in 'Christian terms' to a young pupil in Dakuibeqa the values of this 'gift' inherited by descent?
- A: I think *vila*[*vilairevo*] is contributing to the village economy, housing development... this way we stop urban drift, makes people stay in the village... I think it's much much better to allow people to roam around the streets.
- Q: How would you explain to a young pupil the legend of firewalking?
- A: I think we need to decode the myth to understand... we can't look at Tui Qalita and Tui Namoliwai straightforward, no, we need to decode the myth surrounding them... The way I see it is part of transcendentalism.
- Q: How would you explain to a young pupil the functional aspect, if any, of the [*vilavilairevo*] ceremony in the past?
- A: To me [*vilavilairevo*] is a response of the manifested divine power...
- Q: Do you foresee any 'practical' use of the [*vilavilairevo*] ceremony in the past?
- A: No.
- Q: You said before that we shouldn't allow *vila*[*vilairevo*] to stand alone ... how do you think this ritual is destined to stand, survive, despite its loss of constitutive aspects like the *madrali*?
- A: Not lost, modified... substituted by a prayer to God. If you want to follow *mana* you can place *mana* to every Fijian ceremony... I see *Vila*[*vilairevo*] as another type of *mana*, another manifestation of *mana*.

From a Christian point of view, *mana* becomes “the only meaningful way of describing God and what his power may mean in the Fijian context” (Tuwere 2002: 165). The point seems to be that “as long as they [the firewalkers] believe it's a gift from God... reinterpret, re-label, re-examine what they've been doing, and perform the present practices on the light of the scriptures...” (Manasa Lasaro *ibid.*), the ritual has the blessing of the Wesleyan Church, and complies with the morals of the wider Fijian community gravitating around the Wesleyan Church.

In Reverend Ame Tugawe's words: “[during the *veivakasavasavataki*] I tried only to relate where can we see the *vilavilairevo* in the bible... there was

once in the Old Testament when the three people... Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego..." (Ame Tugaue *ibid.*). Reverend Tugaue's analogy with the biblical prototype of the ordeal by fire is deeply instilled in Fijian consciousness.³²⁴ In Brewster reports of having met some Sawau clan members in the 1870s, who told him "they quite understood how Meschec[sic], Shadrach and Abednego survived the ordeal, and this too is another coincidence between Fijian and Biblical traditions in the Bible" (Brewster 1922: 258).

This syncretic parallelism between the Beqan firewalkers and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego has become a hoary leitmotiv in church's sermons and tourists' 'Fijian customs' acculturation provided by hotels staff. We have already discussed in the Chapter 2 that *vilavilavevo* has the 'character' of an ordeal, but it is not a *judicium Dei*. In a similar context, Toren argues that the appropriation in Fiji of Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper", implies "both a subtle transformation of the present and a revelation of the past" (Toren 1988: 696). Thus, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's biblical account instantiate Fijian tradition, transforming it without denying historical change or doing violence to Fijian tradition (see Toren *ibid.*).

The abolition of the *madrali*, or better its transformation into a prayer to God, as Reverend Vutenavanua specified (see above), follows identical patterns.

³²⁴ The biblical prototype to which the liturgy of the ordeal by fire most often refers is Daniel's story (Daniel 3) of the three men, Meshach, Abednego and Shadrach, who provoked King Nebuchadzennar to submit them to an ordeal by fire after they refused to worship him and walked through the furnace joyously singing, while God sent his angels to protect them. The Christian literature is rich of biblical 'prototypes' of ordeals by fire; Moses, who is not rescued from a fire, but the fire which appears to him does not consume the bush, resembling the fiery furnace; The rescue of Lot from the fire of Sodom and Ghomorrah, instrument of divine judgment; St. Francis of Assisi's petition to undergo an ordeal by fire before a sultan in Egypt to prove the superiority of Christian faith over that of Muslims. (see Benz, 1969).

After all, religion, as Ruth Benedict once said, is universally a *technique for success*. The dialogue with God activates the mental system that handles (moral and immoral) behavior, where the prayer translates in submission in exchange of protection (*inter alia* Boyer 2001; Benedict 1974[1923]; Bierce 1980[1911]).

Shore observes that in ancient Oceania, all powers were inevitably borrowed from the gods. Thus, it is perhaps *fitting* that in parts of Christian Pacific the term *mana* has been returned to its source (Shore 1989: 139, 169). More recently, Tomlinson observes that matters are complicated by the fact that ‘manna’,³²⁵ the mysterious nourishment which was provided miraculously by God to the starving Israelites during their forty years in the desert descending by night like hoarfrost in the form of coriander seed in the book of Exodus, sometimes we undertook a search among the text book archaically rendered ‘mana’, is spelled *mana* in the Fijian translation of the Bible (Tomlinson forthcoming).³²⁶

It is arguable that looking beyond the contextual and constructed analogies, instead of understanding *how* people arrived at their beliefs as a result of intentional choices, Christianity reshaped local culture making a *tabula rasa* of the method of belief formation starting from its source. More precisely, establishing a close link between the Fijian view of *mana* in its relation to the land and the biblical tradition (see Tuwere 2002: 144).³²⁷

In Fiji, traditionally *mana* is embedded in a moral horizon which is larger than just the ‘self’. The individual interiorizes social rules and roles as part of a set of means,

³²⁵ Ebers derives ‘manna’ from the Egyptian *mennu* (Ebers 1881: 236).

³²⁶ Tomlinson observes that Fijian language does not have duplicate consonants (Tomlinson forthcoming).

³²⁷ Like Fijians, Israelites suffered from insularity and were inward looking. Their exile and interpreted biblical traditions helped them to find meaning in history and offered a universalist outlook. The *lotu* offered a dimension of life that was much broader than the *yavusa*, *mataqali*, *itokatoka*.

customs and stories handed down from the ancestors. If something bad occurs, it is because someone has mishandled powerful *mana* or crossed some supernatural force (see Barnes 1984). “A variety of divine entities, ranging from ancestral gods to demigods, rewarded good behavior and punished bad in local communities... nowhere was morality divorced from religion” (Barker 2004: 46). The ‘moral behavior’ borrowed from the gods, highly relational and transmitted genealogically, is infused by religious precepts and practices.

Whether autochthonous religion inevitably reflects the social structure of the community in which it develops, the ‘new’ religion left out of account the fundamental role of the ancestors in taking active care of their descendants. “Christianity reflects another type of social system in which genealogical relationship is not so significant” (Hogbin 1970 [1958]: 182). “Christianity removed clan rank from the control of the native gods, and prestige soon began to depend upon social rather than supernatural sanctions. This brought the individual to the fore and pushed the clan into the background” (Ford 1940: 685). In other words, when the *lotu* arrived, members of the indigenous Fijian community realized that the concept of brotherhood was broadened extending their obligations beyond the members of their own society and beyond their reality, ineluctably offering them a dimension of life and egalitarianism beyond their *yavusa*, *mataqali*, *itokatoka*.

Praise and Prejudice: Methodism, Education and Politics

At the end of April 2004, during my fieldwork in Suva, a lady working at the National Archives asked me to give some advice and guidance to her daughter Mere, a

stressed the importance of “cross-cultural programmes in the schools where... different ethnic groups learn [about] other cultures in Fiji, so that they appreciate each other’s culture. But a deliberate programme from the Ministry of Education? [No, we aren’t] asked to go out and say, ‘This is the strategy... to educate the Fijian child to hold on to what is Fijian traditionally” (quoted in Ewins 1998: 131-2).

Another interviewee told Ewins that “there were more textbooks in Fijian in the 1920s than there are now... [There] were Fijian textbooks [in] geography, history, mathematics, English –[even] Latin, for heaven’s sake. ... And that just doesn’t exist these days. There are no textbooks in Fijian except [on] how to learn Fijian” (quoted in Ewins 1998: 136). The missions, which primarily means the Methodist Church, who were in charge of education until 1920s, when they started facing funding difficulties obliged the colonial government to take over and open more schools. The colonial administration found a solution reaching an agreement with New Zealand to supply Fiji with teachers.

These teachers, brought up in a system denigrating the Maori and their language, transferred this prejudice to Fiji, punishing children for speaking Fijian in school, and did their best to eradicate it (Ewins 1998: 136-7). Sutherland observes that the first union in Fiji was an association of European teachers at Methodist mission schools, formed in 1924 (Sutherland 1992: 81). The ‘legacy’ of this educational climate translated in an exaltation of English over Fijian, particularly in the urban milieu. Education in Fiji, even at the lower primary village level, is exposing Fijian students to modernity and cosmopolitanism. Browsing the discussion and assignments’ topics contained in the

teacher's handbook for classes 1 and 2 I have found the following:³³¹ "Queen Elizabeth II; a letter (and pictures) from Australia or New Zealand; Pictures of Canada –how people live there; Diwali Festival;³³² pictures of Malaya [Malaysia] –how people live there; pictures of China –how people live there; a story (for example, from Europe – an Aesop fable)."³³³ Hence, while 6-7 year old pupils might have heard about a slave named Aesop who lived in the mid-sixth century BC in Ancient Greece and of his fables, they might not be able to read the 'legend' of *vilavilairevo*, or other popular Fijian myths.

My suggestion to Mere was to join me in one of my fieldtrips to the hotels on the Coral Coast where group of *dauvila* from Dakuibeqa regularly perform. On May 4, 2005, in company of Ratu Felix Colatanavanua and Sipiriano Nemani from the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture) we all traveled to the Naviti Resort,³³⁴ where Mere was able to interview 'Small' Paula Levulevu, the *bete* in charge of the *vilavilairevo* that night. Interestingly, an excerpt (in English) of the conclusions from of her final paper earnestly and naively paraphrases both the intuition of Epeli Hau'ofa and the concerns of the Methodist Church's officials:

Firewalking has made the people of Beqa unique and different from anybody else in this universe. The have used this skill to earn money and also entertain. Not only this but they have also got to travel around Fiji and also overseas countries. There have a lot of changes in how the dauvilas [sic] prepare, how they observe their tabu and how they perform the actual ceremony.

In the field of religion the change would appear to be almost complete. Probably everyone on Beqa would claim to be Christian; nearly all Methodists with few families members of the pentecostal churches. Yet

³³¹ Students' age: 6-7

³³² Of all the Indian festivals, in Fiji Diwali is by far the most glamorous and important. As a family festival, it is celebrated 20 days after Dussehra, on the 13th day of the dark fortnight of the month of Ashwin (October / November). The festival commemorates Lord Rama's return to his kingdom Ayodhya after completing a 14-year exile.

³³³ "Social Studies Handbook" for Classes 1 and 2, Ministry of Education, Suva, Fiji, p.5.

³³⁴ See table 3.3 in the previous chapter.

still some of the old legends and beliefs linger or in the memories of the old people. The old kalou vu [her emphasis] are not entirely dead. In fact, Tui Namoliwai gives to the island one of its most important social and financial assets—vilavilairevo—the power to firewalk. (Mere’s research, June 2005)³³⁵

Forman argues that school education is inextricably linked to the church, more in the minds of the Fijians than in those of the missionaries (Forman 1995: 10). Hashimoto observes that although the motivations of the missionaries activities diverged from those of merchants and traders, having a religious objective, through the conversion of Cakobau, they traded and imported a new powerful cultural and communication code. The Fijian Christian teachers learned the alphabet and went back to the villages to propagate the Word of God and education. In this sense, Hashimoto argues that both missionaries and teachers can be considered ‘middlemen’ of this trade (Hashimoto 1989: 11).

Following Derrick’s (2001[1946]) analysis with the Cakobau Government of 1871, the centre of political (religious, economic, educational) gravity shifted irreparably from the villages to the town. Forman observes that education absorbed the greatest amount of energy of the Methodist church in Fiji, for in respect of the ‘Tongan model’, attendance at school went hand-in-hand with attendance at church.³³⁶ By 1925 the Methodists had 384 schools qualified for government aid (Forman 1982: 31). To the village primary schools offering just a little more than literacy and some Bible knowledge, followed “secondary schools which opened wider horizons and were avenues to advancement in community and church” (Forman 1995: 10).

³³⁵ The surname of the student has been intentionally omitted.

³³⁶ Two days after Reverend John Thomas began his mission in Tonga he established a school (Forman 1995: 10).

Reverend Calvert writes that in March 1839 the first Wesleyan Catechism was published in Lakeba dialect while Reverend Cargill was compiling his Vocabulary and Grammar of Lakemban dialect, Reverend Cross was working at Bauan translation of the Genesis, and Reverend Hunt was preparing a ‘Short Catechism’ containing passages from the Scriptures and was about to publish twenty-three short sermons to which was prefixed an address to the native teachers and local preachers (Calvert 1985[1858]: 223).

By 1849 the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society voted the financing of the first edition of the Bible in Fijian language with the assistance of the late Reverend Hunt’s widow. In the meantime the press at Viwa was working full steam. Several educational publications came out in this period: among others, *The Teacher’s Manual: Being Instructions and Directions for the Management of the Work of God in the Fiji District*, twenty-two thousand ‘Reading books’, and Reverend Hazlewood’s *Compendious Grammar of the Fiji Language: with Examples of Native Idioms* (Calvert 1985[1858]). By May 23, 1853 Reverend Hazlewood, despite his serious illness, had completed a rough translation of the Old Testament. Two years later, Reverend Calvert arrived in England with Hazlewood’s manuscript Fijian translation of it. The British and Foreign Bible Society granted £900 toward its publication and Calvert helped to produce 5000 copies of the first complete edition of the Fijian Bible and 10,000 copies of the New Testament (Calvert 1985[1858]: 230; Henderson 1931: 201).

The bible was and still is one of the most important instruments of the Methodist church in Fiji as the ‘Word of God’, therefore inerrant and infallible. Tuwere writes that “the incarnation affirms that Christ is always related to place: the *vanua*... St. John’s prologue says: ‘In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word

was God. He was with God in the beginning (John 1: 1-2)' The Word became flesh! The Word is flesh! If I may make a parallel coupling, it would look like this: the Word became place! The Word is place!" (Tuwere 2002: 105). Henderson argues that because the bible was the inspired Word of God, everything in it dealing with geological, anthropological, paleontological and religious subjects had to be literally true. Cakobau apparently was perplexed at first. One day he threw down a challenge: if anybody could get water out of a rock on waterless islands like Ongea or Vatu Vara, he would embrace Christianity immediately. The challenge was not accepted (Henderson 1931: 283), but the material gains from the white man's God were more convincing than words. A decisive turning-point was the battle of Kaba between the armies of the Christian chiefs and of 'heathen' chiefs.³³⁷ As a result, Jehovah, the white's man God was superior to their gods even in war, for he gave to the white men "those great ships with big guns and crowded with warriors armed with muskets" (Henderson 1931: 263).

Given the growth of private schools with religious affiliation, the configuration of the Methodist church within the newly reified 'Fijian custom' is reinforced through readings constant interpretations of the bible and next to it the hymns. The missionaries immediately realized that singing was one of the greatest joys of the people (Belshaw 1964: 14). However, while few island societies has retained a rich treasury of hymns in a distinctive indigenous musical style (see Cook Islands and Tahiti), most have simply adopted the hymnody of the West (Forman 1990: 28; Allen pers. comm.³³⁸). In

³³⁷ Kaba, 7 April 1855.

³³⁸ Interestingly Bryant Allen (Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at The Australian National University) writes: "In the Cook Islands LMS [London Missionary Society] missionaries used local chants as the basis for hymns. By the 1960s on Mangaia, when these chants were sung in women's bible study groups they had become bawdy (perhaps they always were?), e.g., a woman would chant about all the possible ways the Holy Spirit might have

Dakuibeqa, hymn singing disregards traditional forms of Fijian poetry. Believing that Christian concepts could be put into a poetic dynamic equivalent, faith-expressive textual narratives are replaced by those of the missionaries (see Tuwere 2002: 59), who reshaped the traditional form of Fijian poetry.³³⁹ Reverends Hunt and Lyth composed the first collection of hymns picking up the tune of native lyrics. Heighway collected over thirty *meke* chants of the earlier Christian period which were compositions for schools use mostly based on scriptural themes and translated 87 hymns into Fijian managing to force an English iambic hymn into a trochaic Fijian rhythm (Tippet 1980: 27-8). Choir singing is standardized according to the western way (soprano, alto, tenor, and base), encouraging the singing with only an occasional piano or organ accompaniment, taking up almost half of the service (see Spitz 2000).

If on the one hand Methodist hymnals and choir competitions come to symbolize the evangelical fight against a certain religious formalism, on the other hand they impose a ritualized, competitive, performative, time consuming gregarious activity, reinforcing cohesion and enforcing social control. Ritualized activities pervading daily life in the village, as the enlightening spiritual observance ritualized in choir singing, or the religious ‘cleansing’ through intensive praying (*veivakasavasavataki*), entail a temporary negation of ritual participant’s agency, limiting the participants’ own capacity to make

entered her body, while other women fell about laughing. Then all the women would join in what appeared to be the chorus. These chants had an eerie high harmony that rose and fell suddenly. Years later when I visited a church southeast of Port Moresby, possibly at Gaire, the hairs on the back of my neck rose when I heard the congregation singing what sounded like identical chants with the same cadences. Then I realized that Cook Island missionaries (known by the LMS as “native teachers”) had been brought to the Papua south coast by the LMS and they had presumably taught the Motuans, in this case, Cook Islands chants with Christian words” (Allen, email 7 August 2006).

³³⁹ Most of the choir songs are Bauan translations of John Wesley’s *Methodist Hymnal*, although apparently most of the songs—an estimated 6,000 of them—were written by his brother, Charles Wesley.

sense of events or even their capacity to act.

Rituals generate faith (Asad 1993: 48-52; Geertz 1973: 112; Miyazaki 2000: 44). Miyazaki observes that “by limiting human capacity to act, at least temporarily, participants in these rituals create space for the intimation of the fulfillment of their faith” (Miyazaki *ibid.*). Drawing on Miyazaki’s idea of temporary negation of faith participants’ agency, in a fieldnote I observed the issue of the levies and *solu* (offerings) represents an absurd economic burden imposed by the Methodist church on school’s pupils, and how it has become routinized in traditional communalistic villages where money has a limited use.

Prior to the 2006 elections, Soqosoqo Ni Vakavulewa Ni Taukei (SVT) has been the only party to make a reference to any specific church denomination in its program.³⁴⁰ SVT announced that would progressively increase the education budget. In particular SVT stressed the importance of “research and policies to be put into place to address the unnecessary fundraising by schools under the guise of school activities such as levies on each child to donate for the Methodist Church annual conference singing competition and *solu*. This only happens in Methodist-run schools.”³⁴¹

Curiously, such a statement comes from a party founded in 1990 sponsored by the Great Council of Chiefs (and in government under Rabuka from 1992-99), with the declared goal of uniting all indigenous Fijians and with strong allies in the Methodist

³⁴⁰ Better known by its initials SVT, *Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei* is a party which dominated politics in the 1990s. The party was founded in 1990 as the political vehicle of the Great Council of Chiefs, with the declared goal of uniting all indigenous Fijians. Initially led by Ratu Mara’s wife, Ro Lady Lala Mara, *Roko Tui Dreketi* (Paramount Chief of Burebasaga), was immediately joined by Major General Sitiveni Rabuka and endorsed by the Methodist Church. Internal strife weakened the party, and many influential members grew disillusioned with it, including the Methodist Church. Continuing under the presidency of Rabuka, more recently the SVT found itself fending off allegations relating to the 2000 coup.

³⁴¹ Fiji Times, Monday, 24 April, 2006.

Church. Ewins argues that the *Taukei* Movement³⁴² was more or less made redundant by the creation of the *Sogosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei* (SVT) (Ewins 2000).³⁴³ Lal observes that the *Taukei* Movement “was led by many church leaders such as Reverend Inoke Kubuabola and Reverend Tomasi Raiviki, and Col. Rabuka himself was a lay preacher of the church [...] Such tacit support of the Methodist Church for the basic aims of the coup sent a powerful signal to the bulk of the Fijian community already bewildered and torn between their religious duty and political convictions. It helped to lay the foundations of grassroots support for the coup by portraying it as an act that was politically necessary and morally defensible” (Lal 1988: 95).

From a different angle, Hashimoto argues that during the *Taukei* Movement agitation in conjunction to the two *coups d'état*, Fijians used Christianity as the state religion as a novel weapon against Hindus and Muslims (Hashimoto 1989: 11). According to Garrett, while Reverend Jodateki Koroi, the president of the Methodist Church at the time of the coup, was going through public statements opposing Rabuka and seek restoration of the 1970 Constitution, Reverend Manasa Lasaro and Reverend Isireli Caucau, opposed Koroi and from the headquarters in Suva “organized the church to endorse what the army had done and the chiefs had approved. Koroi was barred from the church’s office”³⁴⁴ (Garrett 1995: 199).

³⁴² *iTaukei* means ‘land-owner. Allegedly, the *Taukei* Movement’s ‘agitation’ formed the backdrop to the two military coups that deposed the elected government in May and September 1987. With the coups’ success, key *Taukei* Movement members rose to positions of power in government. The movement remained active through the period of the post-coup Interim Government, but became less prominent as the 1990s wore on. The movement was not just about maintaining Fijian land-ownership, although that was important among its goals. It was about keeping Fijians in key positions of power and influence in all spheres: government, civil service, business (Ewins: http://www.speedysnail.com/pacific/2000_coup.html).

³⁴³ Pacific Island Politics, May 29, 2000 (http://www.speedysnail.com/pacific/2000_coup.html).

³⁴⁴ Reverend Caucau became president of the Methodist Church, and Reverend Lasaro succeeded

The Christian community in Fiji discovered itself divided in its response to the 1987 and 2000 coups and the crisis that they engendered.³⁴⁵ The role of religion in Fiji continues to be a political issue. The 1997 Constitution provides for freedom of Fiji's citizens to manifest their religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, or teaching (religious groups are not required to register). Of the three major religions, Christians, Hindus, and Muslims, the Methodist Church, with more than 200,000 members can vaunt the support of the majority of the country's chiefs and its influence in the ethnic Fijian community, particularly in the rural areas.³⁴⁶ There is no state religion, although the Methodist Church authorities and allied political parties continue to work for the establishment of a 'Christian state'. Christianity in Fiji plays a key role in the development of society, especially in its work towards education, as a medium to the development of the individual, the community and the country.

In a recent phone conversation with Sipiriano Nemani of the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture),³⁴⁷ which through a weekly radio program reaches out to the most remote villages with talks about different Fijian dialects, traditional medicine, handicrafts, myths and legends³⁴⁸, emerged that Central Suva's Village 6 Cinema closed for business for security reasons as protesters led by the influential Methodist Church took to the streets against the *The Da Vinci Code*. In a

him after renouncing political office offered by Rabuka. Reverend Koroi became a farmer but continued to preach from the Bible dealing with aspects of the coup (Garrett 1995: 200). Under the presidency of Reverend Tomasi Kanilagi, an alleged supporter of George Speight, the leader of the May 19, 2000 coup, it was publicly expressed the intention to use the Methodist Church as a forum under which to unite all ethnic Fijian political parties for the 2001 elections (International Religious Freedom Report 2002, Released by U.S. Department of State, October 7, 2002, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/13872.htm> accessed July 23 2006).

³⁴⁵ And more recently after the December 5th, 2006 coup.

³⁴⁶ A recent report estimates 449,482 Christians, 264,173 Hindus, and 54,323 Muslims.

³⁴⁷ June 15, 2006.

³⁴⁸ See Chapter 6 for current TKEC activities, including the monolingual Fijian dictionary project.

petition presented to Fiji's former Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase, the Methodist Church said *The Da Vinci Code* is "false and mischievous, but strikes at the heart of Christendom."³⁴⁹

The point is that now the Methodist Church is demanding a seat on the country's Film Censorship Board. The assistant general secretary of the Methodist Church, Reverend Tuikilakila Waqairatu, argued they must have a representative on the Censorship Board to protect the Christian faith from any such films in the future and that the protest march was "to demonstrate their faith in front of the instruments of evil in society."³⁵⁰ And Methodist Church of Fiji General Secretary, Reverend Ame Tugawe welcomed the decision of Mr. Damodar, chief executive of Village 6 in Suva, to suspend the projection, but said that a protest planned in Lautoka would still go ahead.³⁵¹

Drawing on Toren's parallel between the ubiquitous presence in Fiji of tapestry reproductions of Da Vinci's fresco 'The Last Supper' and the construction, or evocation, of the 'Fijian way' of a religion 'in the manner of the land' (Toren 1988: 698), the harm of Dan Brown's Last Supper's gambit and its visual tactic fitting Mary Magdalena into the picture as Jesus' wife is palpably foreseeable. Toren observes that the potency of the material image of the fresco can be located in a series of powerful connections with aspects of Fijian society, ritual meal, hierarchy and chiefship, where the chiefs are inherently 'Christian'. Da Vinci's fresco shows only men. More specifically, Toren argues that the disposition and the table evokes that of men, clan chiefs with the

³⁴⁹ AAP, June 02, 2006, <http://www.wrrn.org/article.php?idd=21730andsec=75andcont=all> accessed June 15 2006.

³⁵⁰ Press Release: Radio New Zealand International, June 3, 2006, 5:57pm. <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO0606/S00094.htm> accessed June 15 2006.

³⁵¹ Reuters, June 02, 2006, <http://couriermail.news.com.au/story/0,20797,19339922-1702,00.html?from=rss> accessed June 15 2006.

paramount at their centre, ‘above’ the central serving bowl (*tanoa*) in kava-drinking” (Toren 1988: 707, 709).

While the *The Da Vinci Code* portrays Christian (Catholic) leadership throughout the centuries as suppressing vital truth, the Church is conscious of the danger. The danger today is that so many people have such a remote knowledge of history and Christianity that they will take it as the gospel truth. In Fiji, the Methodist Church is not just contesting the ‘Hollywood truth’ and Gnostic nonsense, but the implicit epistemological process which allows interpretations and re-inventions of (Christian) tradition, obstructing the continuity of those tenets of the orthodoxy ineradicably absorbed into the Fijian national consciousness.

Fast-foods for the Soul: the Charisma of Pentecostal Churches

A colleague returned from Nigeria told me that while the fast food industry is facing a period of recession in Europe, in Nigeria food outlets are springing up like mushrooms in every nook and cranny of the country’s major cities. This new wave, he noticed, can only be compared with the rise in the creation of Pentecostal churches in the country. I immediately noticed a similitude to Fiji’s situation.

While the strongest challenge to the Wesleyan Church came from the Marist missionaries (Society of Mary) of the Roman Catholic Church³⁵² (Bonato pers. comm.,³⁵³ Forman 1982: 30), the Pentecostal churches, the fastest growing Christian movement after WWII, landed in the Pacific in 1926, more precisely in Fiji. According to Ernst

³⁵² The first two Catholic priests from the Marist church arrived in Fiji at Lakeba in 1844. The Archdiocese of Suva was established in July 1966 when Catholic adherents represented the 8.4% of the total population. Today the Province of Suva includes the Archdiocese of Suva and the Dioceses of Rarotonga (Cook Islands) and Tarawa (Kiribati) (Ernst 1994: 211).

³⁵³ Interview Feb. 23 2005 h. 20:00, Suva.

“The religious landscape of the Pacific is changing very fast and especially as the historic mainline churches continue to lose members. It is a question of relevance: what the historic mainline churches have to offer is not any more relevant to the needs and expectation of their members. They are not able to change because they are so conservative; no willingness.”³⁵⁴ (Ernst 2002, 1994; Orr 1976).

Its largest and most affluent denomination, the Assemblies of God (AOG), shares an orthodox understanding of the Scriptures within the mainstream of American Evangelical-Fundamentalists who believe in the Trinity and practice baptism by immersion.³⁵⁵ These new ‘gospel’ sects and consequent religious pluralism are frequently a phenomenon characteristic of the urban areas. New churches, sects, ‘cults’ are more appealing than mainline Methodist churches, they help the migrants from the rural areas to gain acceptance, social standing in their new environment and at the same time to recapture some of the more intimate primary group atmosphere of the church back in the village (see Nottingham 1971: 235; Forman 1990: 30; Barnes 1984: 163). While most Pentecostal denominations in Fiji are aligned with Evangelicalism in that they emphasize the reliability of the Bible and the need for the transformation of an individual’s life with faith in Jesus, they are also ‘premillennial’. My student assistant, Laisiasa and several students at the USP explained to me that they believe we are living in the ‘last days’ before the end of the world, prophesied by ‘signs’, ‘wonders’ and miraculous events.

One day in July 2005, Laisiasa arrived a little late and distressed at our usual lunch appointment (at the McDonald’s in front of the USP-Laucala campus gate). Over a

³⁵⁴ Interview June 11 2002 to Agence France-Presse (in Pacific Island Report, Pacific Islands Development Program/East-West Center).

³⁵⁵ AOG was founded in 1914 at Hot Springs, Arkansas. The early founders were licensed white ministers of the Church of God in Christ, the largest African-American Pentecostal body founded by Charles Harrison Mason in 1897.

McChicken he confided to me that the night before the pastor of his church (UPCI) revealed that the end of the world was coming sometime in August.³⁵⁶ In fact, UPC adherents hope for a second coming of Jesus Christ and the *rapture*³⁵⁷ of the Church. They believe that the Bible is the only God-given authority which man possesses and they share a belief in the resurrection of the dead, the judgment and eternal punishment of the wicked, and the Millennium (Ernst 1994: 70).³⁵⁸

During my fieldwork in Beqa, I had noticed that Laisiasa was staying away from the ‘mainline’ church services and in particular from the *yaqona* sessions, avoiding eating pork, shellfish, and other foods proscribed as ‘unclean’ in Leviticus 11, as well as from alcohol and tobacco. Among young Fijians (20-30 years old) living in town, to comply with these dietary rules does not create any impediment to their social life. In addition, music is a well known metaphor in Pentecostal churches, thus clapping, singing and playing loud instruments is tolerated by the urban communities. In a village instead, the moral obligations inherent to food, *yaqona* and respect, generally speaking do not pardon these kind of idiosyncrasies and modern behavior.

In the village of Rukua, a pseudo-miraculous healing performed by an American

³⁵⁶ The United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI) is a United States-based international Christian denomination of the Pentecostal movement formed in 1945 by a merger of the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated, and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus. One of the fastest growing denominations in North America, arrived in Fiji in 1972 and is ‘competing’ with the Assemblies of God.

³⁵⁷ The ‘rapture’ is important to the understanding of the ‘Last Days’ events. It is believed to take place sometime in the near future based on Apostle Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians and Corinthians. The word ‘rapture’ is translated from the Greek word *harpazo*, which means to ‘snatch up’, or ‘grasp hastily’, Latin ‘*raptus*’. Jesus is expected to come in the air, catch up the Church from the earth, and then return to heaven with the Church (1 Thess, 4:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-53).

³⁵⁸ Emphasis on certain Old Testament laws and their strong belief in Christ’s imminent return, followed by a thousand year period, the Millennium when Christ will reign as King of Kings (Rev. 20: 2-7) (see Ernst 1994: 48).

pastor in the late 1950s opened the door to AOG in Beqa (Tabanavau pers. comm.,³⁵⁹ Labalaba pers. comm.,³⁶⁰ see also Newland 2004: 6). In Rukua, as in other communities, the ‘new’ believers leave the old church for the new arriving with more individualistic interests in mind: their salvation, their health. Many of them buy into the western cultural emphasis on personal well-being and prosperity as ultimate ends for themselves. In Rukua this shift certainly challenged the hold of the long-established Methodist church and in particular its emphasized compatibility between traditional customs and Christianity, which is currently considered *vakavanua* (‘in the way of the land’) (*inter alia* Kaplan 1990: 134; Tomlinson 2002: 251).

Nevertheless, this new approach towards Christianity did not stop Rukua performing *vilavilairevo* at the Hibiscus Festival in Suva in 1958, signing the first contract with a hotel in 1961,³⁶¹ hosting a major *vilavilairevo* ceremony for Prince Charles in 1974, and bringing a contingent of Rukuan firewalkers overseas to the East-West Center at the University of Hawai‘i and at The Polynesian Cultural Center in 1976. However, the spiritual focus of the Rukuans shifted again after an inter-denominational para-church organization called Every Home for Christ (EHC) arrived in Fiji in 1984.³⁶² After working closely with the Methodist Church and also with the Assemblies of God, the Methodist church withdrew their ‘cooperation’ excommunicating EHC and all its members and supporters. Despite the activity of dissuasion operated by Reverend Manasa

³⁵⁹ Interview Jan. 4 2005 h. 15:30, Rukua, Beqa

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Korolevu Beach Hotel, 30km east of Sigatoka, whose arson in the 1980s allegedly occurred as a result of a land dispute.

³⁶² Originally founded as “World Literature Crusade” in 1946, in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada. Its first chairperson in Fiji was Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, a Fijian politician allegedly taking part to the *Taukei* movement and in the 1987 and 2000 coups (Ernst 1994: 92; Pacific Media Watch - Pasifik Nius, 17 August 2000).

Lasaro at chiefly and government level to stop all the EHC activities, in 1990 the EHC formed its own church, the Christian Mission Fellowship (CMF), a charismatic sect³⁶³ with over sixty churches in Fiji and a growing number of adherents (Ernst 1994: 93).

What happened in Rukua follows the deep concerns expressed by the former President of the Methodist Church Reverend Isireli Caucau:

They [EHC] divide families and villages. Whenever they [EHC] take some men from the families, they no longer go back to help or to give or to do something in the families, same as the clan and the tribe. (Caucau quoted in Ernst 1994: 93)³⁶⁴

According to Newland, who visited Rukua³⁶⁵ in April 2001 with her students to watch the first *vilavilavirevo* since 1993 “after a split between Methodists and various groups of Pentecostalists (predominately Assemblies of God and Christian Mission Fellowship)” (Newland 2004: 5), AOG was no longer the focus of village tension, and both Methodist Church and AOG had lost adherents to the CMF, which now ‘controls’ more than half of the village (Tubanavau pers. comm.,³⁶⁶ see also Newland 2004: 7, 17; Oram 1997: 27).³⁶⁷ Newland is correct about the negative influences of CMF on Rukua’s *vilavilavirevo*, however Rukua did not ban *vilavilavirevo* completely. CMF provoked an unprecedented factionalism, ‘decimating’ the Rukuan firewalkers,

³⁶³ Term used to describe those evangelical-fundamentalist churches believing in healing, miracles and glossolalia.

³⁶⁴ Interviewed by Ernst in Suva, 13 Nov. 1992.

³⁶⁵ In her article Newland identifies Beqa, but uses the fictional name of NaKula for Rukua.

³⁶⁶ Interview July 26 2005 h: 9:30, Navua.

³⁶⁷ A small percentage embraced the emerging All Nations Christian Fellowship formed in 1997 by Reverend Epeli Ratabacaca. The church has spread throughout Fiji and the outer islands with its simple mission of “populating heaven and de populating hell”[sic] (<http://www.ozfiji.com/nation.html> accessed June 22 2006).

It has been registered as a church in Australia since 2002 and its headquarters in Sydney is 12 Poole Street, Carnes Hill, NSW 2171.

reduced to a dozen, and forcing them to hold their occasional performances (three total in 2004)³⁶⁸, ‘outside’ the village’s boundaries at the old settlement of Naduruvesi.

An interesting episode, which occurred while I was visiting Rukua in February 2005, is emblematic of this situation. A European five-star cruise line contacted the Roko Tui Rewa, Savenaca Kamikamica³⁶⁹ to organize a firewalking show for their 500 guests. Rukua apparently was an ideal candidate, for Dakuibeqa’s firewalkers already had several commitments, and the ship could cast anchor off the fringing reef right in front of the village. My field consultant, Mika Tubanavau was the ‘contact man’ in charge of the financial aspect of the performance, while his wife Sai was in charge of the *meke*.

However, ostracism and resistance were hindering Rukua’s preparation. Isimeli Tone,³⁷⁰ a 58 year old Rukuan, was the appointed *bete* for the ceremony, but the (few) Rukuan *dauvila* (firewalkers) were hesitating, and costumes were not ready. Mika explained to me that these kind of deals bring thousand of dollars to the village’s pockets in one single day, and are not that simple to turn down (Tubanavau pers. comm.)³⁷¹ Savenaca Kamikamica immediately contacted Timoci Tabanuqa and his group in Soliyaga,³⁷² who brought twelve *dauvila* with their own costumes, leaving to Mika and Isimeli the task to prepare at Naduruvesi the *lovo* (pit) and collect *kau* (wood), *waqabalabala* (tree fern trunk [*Cyathea lunulata*]), *drau ni balabala* (tree fern leaves [ibid.]), *wa lai* (woody climber [*Entada scandens*]), *uso* (long poles) and *drau ni dogo*

³⁶⁸ Mika Tubanavau, pers. comm., Feb. 11, 2005, h.10:00, Suva.

³⁶⁹ Related to the Tui Sawau family of Dakuibeqa-Dakuni.

³⁷⁰ See previous chapter “R1” group.

³⁷¹ Interview Feb. 24 2005 h. 11:30, Suva.

³⁷² See previous chapter “S1” group.

(mangrove leaves [*Rhizophora mangle*]), commonly referred to as *draunikau ba*.³⁷³

Kinship solidarity helped Rukua to ‘save face’ one more time. The next chapter will be more discursive on the purported reputation of Rukua in the tourism industry.

Emblematic is how in Rukua CMF’s informant manipulates elements of the *vilavilairevo* narrative deceiving the occasional visitor or the ethnographer on duty while at the same time augmenting the spreading of discreditable information about the ritual.

[T]he priest [*bete*]³⁷⁴ is required to go up to the dwelling place [Namoliwai] of the fire spirits [*veli*] on the mountain to invite them to the firewalking ceremony. The following day a *sevu-sevu* (ceremony for gift presentation involving *yaqona* drinking) [sic] is held before the firewalking, while the stones are being heated under burning logs. Although the village men should already hold the power necessary to walk over the hot stones, a magic word is used to cool the heat as an added precaution to prevent the men from getting burnt. (Anonymous CMF member, quoted in Newland 2004: 8)

It should be specified that the practice of walking upstream to the Namoliwai river at dawn, on the day chosen for the performance, more precisely to place some sticks which would allow the *veli* to cross the stream to join and assist the *bete* in the *vilavilairevo*, is characteristic only to the village of Rukua and it is long gone (Vakuruivalu pers. comm.;³⁷⁵ Vitukawalu pers. comm.;³⁷⁶ Tubanavau pers. comm.³⁷⁷). As for the *sevusevu*, the CMF informant was more likely referring to the *madrali*, which might have been still practiced in Beqa before the 2002-2003 *veivakasavasavataki*. Any association to *yaqona* is

³⁷³ For the use and steps of the ceremony see Chapter 2.

³⁷⁴ The previous chapter shows that in Rukua there are no *mataqali* Naivilaqata members, although members of the *yavusa* Naduruvesi assume the ‘role’ of *bete*.

³⁷⁵ Interview Jan. 23 2005 h. 11:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

³⁷⁶ Interview Feb. 10 2005 h. 14:00, Suva.

³⁷⁷ Interview Jan. 4 2005, h. 15:00, Rukua, Beqa.

misleading and specious, for also *yaqona* is in the CMF ‘black list’. As for the ‘magic spells’, it is another naïve exaggeration formed around the ‘stigmatization’ of the ritual by the Pentecostal churches in Fiji.

Newland also reports in a footnote, that another CMF informant told her that the “area where the spirits of firewalking settled is on the other side of the island under a different chief.” (Newland 2004: 17). While the upper Namoliwai river area remains the unchanged historical setting of the *veli* (the little gods of firewalking), this statement might imply a subtle provocation, a retort directed to the Tui Sawau and to the village of Dakuibeqa, home of the ‘custodians’ of the *vilavilavirevo*.

In Chapter 7, when analyzing issues of ‘property’ and ‘custodianship’ of the *vilavilavirevo* ceremony, I argue that the respect of the land, the chief and the elders from Dakuibeqa coincides to the ‘authorization’ to perform the *vilavilavirevo*. The permission to perform the ceremony granted to intertribe groups is not necessarily lifetime. In cases of inappropriate behavior it could be ‘revoked’ from the Tui Sawau and the *bete levu* residing in Dakuibeqa. One version of a popular oral account recounted in the same chapter shows that a land dispute between Daluibeqa and Rukua in the mid 1960s, accompanied by the inappropriate behavior of some Rukuan elders, resulted in the deprivation of the Rukuans’ of the ‘power’ necessary to perform the *vilavilavirevo*.

*Sa qai ratou dau laki vila tiko o iratou mai Rukua tekivu mai na gauna
koya sa vaka me ratou sa qesa tiko ga. Sa mani yacova sara mai na gauna
ratou sa sega tale ni qai vila.*

The people from Rukua kept performing the *vilavilavirevo*, but from that day on they kept getting burnt. Then came the time when they couldn’t

perform the *vilavilatrevo* anymore.³⁷⁸ (Vakuruivalu pers. comm.)³⁷⁹

What it is clearly emerging, is how CMF profited by the Methodist church's attempts of 'renewal and reconciliation' (i.e., *veivakasavasavataki*) in Beqa, speculating their inefficacy and convincing the Rukuans to turn to the CMF church to expunge a suppositional deadly 'curse' on the families of the firewalkers:

When they (convert), its stops them from dying so young because of the curse on their families. Men have been dying at such a young age in every family, leaving their wife and their children. So I started to teach them a lesson called 'Passing, from curse to blessing,' the ancestral curse from their forefathers. I taught them about difference of curse and blessing and today our members in NaKula [Rukua] are not performing firewalking... When they were being taught, one man came and confessed that he used to have demons (ancestral spirits) [sic] and (his line) was cursed by their ancestral god so that every men will die. Although many pastors from the Methodist church came to stop the curse, none of them stopped it, so it continued and people still got sick, but when God intervened, the ancestral curse stopped and they began to have a good life and possess what belongs to them. (CMF Pastor, quoted in Newland 2004: 10)

A former Rukuan *bete* of firewalking, who prefers to remain anonymous, granted me exactly five minutes of conversation about *vilavilatrevo* without the use of the tape-recorder. He had participated in the epic trip to Hawai'i in 1976 organized by Rukuan firewalking impresario Peceli Vitukawalu and led by Rukuan *bete* Timoci Turaga, his mentor. He told me he had stopped performing five years before (2000), admitting that the 'church' was the main reason, but not entering in any specific personal motivation. He told me that he did not remember having any picture from his trip to Hawaii, which he was reticent to talk about.

³⁷⁸ See the 'Vendetti' incident in Chapter 7.

³⁷⁹ Interview Jan. 24 2005 h. 17:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

This painful interview, ended when he stated that he had now ‘different interests’ which he preferred not to talk about either.³⁸⁰

According to both CMF and AOG churches, witchcraft’s stigma, *tevoru* association and early death are the professed condemnations and consequences Rukuans must be prepared to suffer if they want to participate in the *vilavilairevo*. Interestingly, some Rukuans mentioned in the previous chapter remain indifferent to the menace, probably noticing that while the *bete levu* of *vilavilairevo* in Dakuibeqa, Sevanaia Waqasaqa, is nonchalantly turning ninety, most of the *bete* leading the performing firewalking groups described in the previous chapter are over fifty and in good health.

Similarly, Koroi Sivinia, who substitutes ‘Big Josh’ (see Chapter 5) in the presentation of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony at The Fijian-Shangri-La Resort, after dribbling my interview during my early visits to the hotel, one day confessed me his dilemma. He explained to me that he was uneasy talking about *vilavilairevo*. He told me he was undergoing a spiritual crisis, and had almost decided to never have anything to do with the *vilavilairevo* ceremony again, in other words resigning from his position of host at the show. A co-worker at the hotel who had recently joined the Assembly of God keep tormenting him accusing him of worshipping the *tevoru*. A churchman himself, Koroi told me he started obsessively questioning himself about the power of the Sawau people: “from where does it come from, from God or from the *veli*?” he also asked me (Sivinia

³⁸⁰ Interview Jan. 4, 2005 h.15:30, Rukua, Beqa.

pers. comm).³⁸¹

The crusade of the Pentecostal churches in Fiji is gaining momentum and political endorsements through a blend of material and spiritual impulses. In December 2004 the news of an imminent visit of controversial Pentecostal preacher, faith healer, and televangelist Benny Hinn, sponsored by the Christian Mission Fellowship³⁸², made the front page of the local press and reached the most remote villages, including Beqa. More recently, Radio New Zealand International³⁸³ was commenting on the fierce controversy broken out in Fiji over the Benny Hinn miracle crusade held at the Post Fiji Stadium in Suva on January 20-22, 2006 attended by thousands Fijians.³⁸⁴

While two busloads of people from the Fiji Disabled People's Association who went to seek cures from Benny Hinn were turned away, and only carefully-selected people were admitted on stage, Fiji's former Prime Minister Qarase, who attended the three-day crusade with his wife and members of his cabinet, declared that "the message of salvation was what mattered and not the healing which was only a small part of it."³⁸⁵ The spokesman for Christian Mission Fellowship and public relations coordinator of the Benny Hinn Miracle Crusade, Manasa Kolivuso said to the media there were misunderstandings between the security coordinators and he apologized for their attitude. He concluded saying that "We [CMF] can bring in people we like to bless the nation. Just

³⁸¹ Interview Dec. 16 2004 h. 12:30, The Fijian-Shangri-La Resort, Viti Levu.

³⁸² Suliassi Kurulo, Senior Pastor of the World Harvest Centre church in Suva, Fiji, President of the Christian Mission Fellowship, Chairman of the Assembly of Christian Churches, is the Chairman of the organizing committee for the Benny Hinn Miracle Crusade.

³⁸³ Radio New Zealand International Online January 24, 2006
<http://www.news.vu/en/news/RegionalNews/060124-Prime-Minister-Defends-Benny-Hinn-Crusade.shtml> accessed July 16 2006.

³⁸⁴ While Pastor Kurulo estimated more than 370,000 people attending the event, other media sources cautiously cut the figures in a half or even less. According to the *Fiji Times*, more than FJ\$100,000 [US\$58,600] were collected from the crowd.

³⁸⁵ FijiSun, Jan. 24, 2006.

because some people do not like Benny Hinn, it doesn't mean they can stop us. Hinn is returning in June [2006] for a pastor's[sic] conference and to preach to anybody who wants to hear. Signs and wonders will follow. He is not the healer, the healing comes from God."³⁸⁶

In a recent email Laisiasa, my student assistant, writes: "I didn't attend Rev Benny Hinn's Crusade but there were a lot of rumours. People ran for miracles but some were healed at an instance but then after sometime got paralysed again. Some say *he* is a *cult*, but like I've said it was part of everyone's conversations for some time. I believe people are running after physical healing but what is most important is spiritual rebirth which heals the spiritual and physical being. The bible says that in the last days people are going to be dragged around by such miracles as false prophets. I'm not saying that he is one, but just for your information..." (Laisiasa pers. comm.)³⁸⁷

Prophets and divine healing are becoming a fast 'solution' for the souls of a growing number of Fijians. The price is the eradication of all pre-Christian beliefs and practices alienating Pentecostal converts to their past even more than through the Methodist doctrine. The belief that the end of the world is approaching urges each person to prepare to render his or her life sin-free, cleansing the body and the mind. While cosmopolitanism challenges local beliefs and practices, building on Miyazaki's observation about the Fijian Adventists, the new converts "do not portray their church as exclusively and independently Fijian and do not regard the church as a forum for the explicit celebration of Fijian ethnicity" (Miyazaki 2000: 33). Emblematic sermons, in Rukua and anywhere

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Email July 22, 2006.

else in Fiji, focus on the present and the future, disregarding, denying, disbelieving the past (see Miyazaki 2000: 37). In this context, the rejection of secular norms obliges a radical departure from tradition seeing a reassertion of moral precepts which the Pentecostals deem to have been ‘ignored’ by secular society.

Dauvila kei Dauveivakabulai: neither Witchcraft nor Sorcery

I will never forget shortly after my arrival in Dakuibeqa, the *matanivanua*’s hearty laugh while I was confabulating about the *veli* (little gods of firewalking) and the *madrali*. “That’s old stuff... *tevoro!*” he replied like if somebody was cracking a good joke “no more today...worshipping creatures or spirits of the forest is against the dogmas I grew up with”³⁸⁸ (Nabure pers. comm.)³⁸⁹

One aspect emerging from some of the accounts collected among Methodist and Pentecostal ministers is the amateurishness (aggrandized by dogmatism) about ‘spirits’ and ‘gods’, often combined and confused. While spirits are a vague force, ancestral gods, in Fiji and in Beqa are conceived as ‘beings’, with peculiar somatic and even lexical characteristic (see Levy, Mageo and Howard 1996: 15). From the oral accounts I collected juxtaposed to those collected in the late 1970s by Bigay, Rajotte and Tubanavau emerges that all of the *kalou vu* (ancestral gods) of Beqa are traceable to actual men who once lived, usually important chiefs who exercised great *sau* (power), who maintain their own social hierarchy, inhabit a humanlike world of social relations and are believed to be much concerned with the affairs of the living (Bigay et. al. 1981: 131; Bigay pers.

³⁸⁸ He did not grow up in the village, but in Suva.

³⁸⁹ Interview Nov. 28 2004 h.10:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

comm.³⁹⁰; Tubanavau pers. comm.³⁹¹; Tuwere 2002: 54).

Tui Namoliwai is the ‘god of firewalking’, head of the tribe of *veli* inhabiting the Namoliwai region, more often simply referred to as *gone* (literally ‘children’). They are described having a dark-skinned, square-built physique, shorter than men, long thick hair, and a particular idiosyncratic distaste for coconuts (Vakuruivalu pers. comm.³⁹²), lastly, according to Seemann, “they sing sweetly and occasionally gratify the Fijians with a song” (Seemann 1973[1862]: 204). In Beqa the story goes that in each Sawau *bete* family (priestly clan) at least one member per generation resembles one of them. Object of the jokes of the current generation for his striking resembling physiognomy is Apenisa Kuruiwaca, the septuagenarian *bete* from Naceva.

Several people in Beqa claim to have ‘seen’ them, or dreamed about them. One day Wame Turanivalu, a *dauvila* from Dakuibeqa, told me that his wife, originally from Lau, had a tormented dream populated by hundreds of dark-skinned ‘kids’ with unfamiliar faces running naked around the *lovo* in front of their house on Dakuibeqa’s waterfront. That particular fire-pit was prepared few days before to host a ‘private’ *vilavilairevo* for the Royal Davui Resort manager and the hotel’s official photographer. Wame believes that his wife’s dream was a revealer of a faux pas in the execution of the ceremony, which in fact was not properly ‘closed’, for it turned out to be more a photo shoot than an exhibition per se (Turanivalu pers. comm.)³⁹³

In another instance, after a performance at the Naviti Resort, Waisake Ratulolo, a *dauvila* from Dakuibeqa, told me of being approached by a puzzled Australian tourist

³⁹⁰ Interview June 29 2006 h. 20:00, Honolulu.

³⁹¹ Interview Feb. 11 2005 h.10:00, Suva.

³⁹² Interview Dec. 6 2004 h.12:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

³⁹³ Interview Nov. 27 2004 h. 15:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

who showed him a strange picture on his digital camera's screen. Among other pictures snapped during the show one displayed a short hairy naked man inside the *lovo* with the *dauvila*. Elaisa 'Junior' Cavu, the presentation manager I met a week after at the Naviti Resort, told me that he had no doubt it was one of the *veli*, and that he was thrilled he could add this anecdote to his presentation curriculum (Ratulolo pers. comm.;³⁹⁴ Cavu pers. comm.³⁹⁵)

While in my historical analysis of the *vilavilairevo* attempted in Chapter 2, I have strenuously confuted any past association between *vilavilairevo* and cannibalism, in this section I can argue the groundlessness of any connection between *vilavilairevo* and witchcraft. Levy, Mageo and Howard observe that:

Gods can be manipulated through interpersonal moral techniques such as praise, supplication and gift giving—just as high status human can be. Spirits are vague forces... They exist at the margins of the human order in a dreamlike world of shifting categories, vague motivations, and amorphous relations with other beings. Spirits are either avoided or manipulated through devices of direct 'magical' power. The relation between gods and spirits is representative of the relations between the center and the margins of the social order and has much to say about these relations... Gods generally represent forces of social order but are characteristically more distant from sensual experience. Their acceptance is more likely to be grounded in doctrine of 'faith'.... Since Christianity does not provide a well-defined frame for experiencing spirits, it collapses them into a Christian [undifferentiated] demonic realm which is much vaguer than spirits' traditional classification. So when old religion go (and with them former gods), spirits become even more unbounded, chaotic and shadowy... (Levy, Mageo and Howard 1996: 15)

Moreover, gods, being more 'personlike', are related to people's conscience and personhood. They are central to the process of representing and sanctioning the community's moral order through socially adequate rewards and punishment. Spirits on

³⁹⁴ Interview, May. 4 2005 h. 20:00, Naviti Resort

³⁹⁵ Interview May. 4 2005 h. 20:00, Naviti Resort, Viti levu.

the other hand, are associated to people's bodies and are 'extra-moral', representing an antiworld in which community morality is peripheral or irrelevant. Gods and spirits co-exist, but the former can be used to control and protect against the latter and their negative influences (Levy, Mageo and Howard 1996: 16, 21; see also Becker 1995; Katz 1993).

The array of names used in Beqa to describe the little gods of firewalking, *veli* (fairies, gnomes, goblins), *gone* (children), and rarely *manumanu* (little non-human, animal-like beings), indicates that besides the name and title of their chiefly ancestor, Tui Namoliwai, there is not a univocal term to describe them. They are *not* spirits, witches, ghosts or 'supernatural entities' in their classic connotation, but small 'numinous'³⁹⁶ beings, always appearing as male, living in a parallel humanlike world, with a parallel structure: village, chief, rules, dietary and social habits. There are no accounts of them being called to aid in the workings of magic, witchcraft like benign or malevolent demons, exercise possession behavior on predisposed selves or needed to be exorcized. Besides their notorious naivete, occasional spitefulness and elusiveness, it seems to me that the *veli* of the Namoliwai river are a trustworthy male version of the 'muses'³⁹⁷ presiding over the *vilavilairevo*. Evocative of analogous traits is Brewster's vivid description of the *veli* populating Viti Levu's highlands:

The natives of my time [1840-1910] used to maintain that the forest, and the waste spaces were still inhabited by a dwarf or pigmy people, visible only to the faithful, handsome little folk with large fuzzy mops of hair, miniatures of what their own were like until they were cropped in deference to the sanitary requirements of the Wesleyan missionaries.

³⁹⁶ Numinous (from the Latin *numen*, 'supernatural divine power') is a term first coined by German theologian, Rudolf Otto, to describe that sense of awe-inspiring wonder, which one might feel in certain places or situations where one senses the presence of God or spiritual beings - the sense of 'other-ness' about the situation (Otto 1950[1923]).

³⁹⁷ In the Greek sense of goddesses who presided over the arts and sciences.

These little sylvan creatures were called *Veli* and took the place of our own fairies. They loved the woods, the open grasslands and the sparkling brooks, and dwelt in hollow trees, caves and dugouts. They had their own bananas, *kava* and other wild plants from which the varieties now in cultivation have been evolved. There is a beautiful fern called *Iri ni Veli*, the fan of the fairies, so called from its resemblance to the fronds of the magnificent *Pichardia Pacifica*, from which are made the *viu* or palm fans, one of the insignia of chiefly rank. (Brewster 1967[1922]: 88)

Far from proposing a treatise on fauns, fairies, gnomes and goblins, several elements confirm traits' similitude between the *veli* from Viti Levu's mountainous region and those inhabiting the upper Namoliwai river region in Beqa: the predilection for natural streams of water, tree ferns, and sweet fruits. Brewster suggests that the *veli* are 'akin' to the *luve-ni-wai* ('children of the water'), the miniature men with a large head of hair populating the woodlands of Colo East. However, debunking a popular credence that the *luve-ni-wai* (or *luveniwai*)—denounced and suppressed by the missionaries—were malignant creatures, Brewster argues instead that the people he talked to used to meet these little creatures in the woods for they claimed they were their *daunivucu* (experts in poetry) who taught them songs and dances (Brewster 1967[1922]: 223; Deane 1921: 33; Quain 1948: 238).

The missionaries looked at the *luve-ni-wai* as a complex combination of spirit possession, sorcery and tribal cult, which seemed to have been an ancient and widespread practice in many parts of Fiji. The *luveniwai* were believed to be worshipped and enter a person's body and give him special powers. Once achieved, they were capable of superhuman acts of divination and courage (Williams 1982[1858],³⁹⁸ Hocart 1929;³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸ An alternative name for the *luveniwai* is *ndomindomi* [sic] (Williams 1982[1858] quoted Kaplan 2005: 50).

³⁹⁹ Hocart, refers them as 'elves' and argues that they do not live inland but on the shore, they are worshipped only on shores near a nice beach (Hocart 1929: 202).

Deane 1921; Chapelle 1975; Kaplan 1989: 352-3). Like in the case of Marika Tivitivi, Samu's father, punished by the *veli*, if neglected or not respected properly, the *luveniwai* are believed to cause illness (Spencer 1941: 31-32). Their actions are often dictated by clear-cut 'likes and dislikes, loves and hates'.

The *luveniwai*, has been historically associated to a ritual conducted by the *vuniduvu*, in which a group of youth under his leadership gathered in a *bure* (*bolabola*) "drumming bamboos to lure inland the wild gods of the sea to make themselves invulnerable" (Kaplan *ibid.*; de Marzan 1972 [ca1891-1925]: 16). Or a 'secret society', a 'cult', used by someone who wished to kill somebody, through a formal petition to the *luveniwai* spirit to hit the *yalo* (soul) of the victim accompanied by a libation of *yaqona* (see de Marzan 1972 [ca1891-1925]: 12;⁴⁰⁰ de Marzan 1908: 727; Rougier 1972 [ca1891-1925]: II;⁴⁰¹ Deane 1921: 34; Spencer 1941: 17).

According to Spencer the *luveniwai* have "no connection with water" for their cult probably originated on the mountain range of Nakauvadra in Northeastern Fiji (Spencer *ibid.*). Kaplan observes that in Fijian *wai* (water) also means 'medicine' (Kaplan 1989: 366; de Marzan 1972 [ca1891-1925]: 12; Quain 1948: 241), thus successively she alternatively names them 'spirits of remedy' (Kaplan 1995: 50). Nevertheless, I would be careful not to jump to sudden conclusions based on simple analogy about a relationship between the *veli* and *luveniwai*.

Steymeist, misinterprets Brewster (1967[1922]: 222) and repeats Roth's solecism (Roth 1933: 48), concluding that Tui Namoliwai "is apparently one of these creatures...

⁴⁰⁰ "J'explique ici une observance qui se pratique dans tous les pays ou le 'luve ni wai' de Kubulau ou de Vanualevu est en usage. Comme le 'vunidivu' est possédé du 'tevoru ni wai', il s'ensuit que lorsqu'il remet l'eau, le 'tevoru' est enveloppé avec l'eau, il faut donc prendre bien soin de ne pas le laisser échapper." (de Marzan ca1891-1925: 12).

⁴⁰¹ Chapter II 'Divination'.

luveniawai [sic]”, and that *vilavilairevo* is “cognate with certain other rites and ritual performances, *kalou rere* or *Luve Ni Wai* [sic]” (Stymeist 1996: 5, 9). From Quain’s narration of his encounter with the son of a shaman in Nakoroka in the 1940s, it appears instead that *veli* and *luveniawai* are not the same thing (Quain 1948: 238)⁴⁰². I draw the same conclusion from a series of assumptions.

Both of them—like most spirits, divinities, fauns, gnomes, fairies and goblins—tend to interfere with the lives of the humans, sometime benignly promoting their interests, sometime being rancorous and malevolent. Both also endure the discursive Fijian term of endearment ‘children’ (*gone/luve*), plausibly because all these creatures are believed ‘smaller’ than men. Both of them could be considered ritual means toward invulnerability, although several are the rituals in Fiji believed to bring invulnerability. In this context, Jean de Marzan, a Marist Father who served in Fiji from 1893 to 1927 left an invaluable account of Fijian customs and beliefs in 43 letters and several descriptive papers published in the German-based ethnographic periodical *Anthropos* between 1907 and 1913, translated by Thomas in 1987 on *Domodomo*.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² The son of the shaman tells Quain that he learned “to cure several sicknesses and to deal with many kinds of spirits, the *veli* and the *uwawa* who teach the modern sitting dance, bring luck at cards, and assist a thief who wishes to steal from the Indians or a store. He also dealt extensively with the Children-of-Water [*luveniawai*]. These [the *luveniawai*] are useful in all manner of trickery; they rank just below true ancestors and are sometime addressed as such” (Quain 1948: 238).

⁴⁰³ An earlier manuscript version of the articles exist in the Archives of the Oceania Marist Province Archives in Suva. The manuscripts are contained in a small exercise book marked as PMB 463. A largely faithful typescript copy is among “Quelques Notes sur Fiji, les Fijiens et la Religion Catholique a Fiji” marked as PMB 439. The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PMB) at the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University in Canberra, Australia is a non-profit organisation established in 1968 to identify and make preservation microfilm copies of archives, manuscripts and rare printed documents relating to the South Pacific Islands.

In his account on ‘Fiji’s secret societies’ de Marzan individuates several distinguished phenomena. The first, referred as *baki* by all the West Fiji tribes, or *nanaga* [sic] (in Serua), is a pre-session times invulnerability rite, plausibly practiced to prepare for war, whose secret proceedings were held in the *naga* (an elevated stone enclosure) where the *bete* was preparing a *norriture sacre* and an *eau sacre*—which de Marzan specifies it has a much better taste than *yaqona*—accompanied by a *meke* (de Marzan 1972 [ca1891-1925]: 13-16). Another one is *kalou vatu* (lit. ‘stone god’), whose adepts were becoming physically insensitive like stone. de Marzan observes that the *kalou vatu* were especially practiced before going to war, but were also done for pure complacency (de Marzan 1972 [ca1891-1925]: 16-17; Kaplan 1995: 50).⁴⁰⁴

Another invulnerability ceremony is the *kaibuca*, a pagan ceremony that fell into disuse in the 1870s which inspired other ‘secret societies’ in Serua, Naitasiri, Namosi, Ra and Colo East, known as *gunu baba* (drinking taro stems) a potion probably used in their version of the ceremony. The *kaibuca* employed an offering of the flowers from the ripe *duruka* (a graminaceous plant resembling sugarcane) to the *vuniwai* (sorcerer, doctor), followed by an invocation to a serpent (*dolo ni gata*) and ordeal by spear on the initiates (de Marzan 1972 [ca1891-1925]: 17-18).

The most celebrated ‘secret society’ in Fiji (Colo West, Serua, Nadroga, Naitasiri, Ba, Ra, Colo East) according to de Marzan is the *kai Nakauvadra*,

⁴⁰⁴ On the origin of the *kalou vatu* de Marzan says that “Le gens de l’interieur adonnes a cette secte vous diront que ce furent les Kai Navakavu, les Kai Nadakuni qui etaient les propagateurs de cette societe” (de Marzan ca1891-1925: 16).

which has a recent origin. The society's 'founders' were the *tuka* (ancients or immortals) living at Drauniivi near Nakauvadra, erroneously confused with the *luve ni wai* (de Marzan 1987[1908]: 15). Once its initiates are possessed by a medium (*kai Nakauvadra*) in rapport with the *vuniduvu*, they become insensible to pain (de Marzan 1972 [ca1891-1925]: 18-20). Lastly, Fison reports also about the *kalou rere* (lit. 'fearsome deity'),⁴⁰⁵ a society he reconnects to an old priest of Rakiraki who dispensed *wai ni tuka* (water of tuka), according to Kaplan an 'elixir of immortality' (Fison 1867 quoted in Kaplan 1995: 50-1).

Notably, Gordon-Cumming distinguishes the *veli* from other fairy creatures, saying that her list "contains more than fifty of their names, but I believe is incomplete" (Gordon-Cumming 1901[1881]: 143). She describes them as tiny men (*Vélé*) inhabiting of the great *dakua* (*Coniferae*) or *kaurie* (pine-forests) with high conical heads, carrying small hand-clubs which they throw at all trespassers. Interestingly, she observes that "if you have the wit to carry in your hand a fern-leaf, they are powerless, and fall at your feet, crying 'Spare me'" (Gordon-Cumming *ibid.*), a character trait analogous to the Beqa-Namoliwai *veli*'s predilection for the *balabala* (tree fern, *Cyathea lunulata*).

Building on Kaplan, what I disagree with, is the way boundaries have been drawn around all these phenomena, how they have been reified, conflated and labeled. If we look at the example of the copiously documented western folkloristic tradition (see Rose 1996), we understand how impractical it is to try to establish a taxonomy among families of fauns, fairies, gnomes, elves, deities and

⁴⁰⁵ *Kalou rere* prophesied the return of the Twin Gods Nacirikaumoli and Nakausabaria (Kaplan 1995: 46).

worshipping rituals claiming intrinsic similarities among their alleged demonic habitus. Or, from a Christian theological point of view, it is unrewarding indiscriminately placing on all these phenomena the stamp of *tevoru*. Analogies exist, or better resists, because they are the result of colonial and religious authorities' successful efforts to conceive and label the *luveniwai*, marginal, dubious deviant activity and 'revivals' of heathen and irrational 'cults',⁴⁰⁶. Kaplan argues in fact that there are many parallels in other colonial societies (Kaplan 1988, 1989, 1995).⁴⁰⁷

This section suggests that instead of finding a label for antiquities and expressions of folklore, establishing analogies and processualizing culture, we should analyze how the rise of an hegemonic state, or an institution such as the church routinizes, marginalizes, criminalizes, and charges as deviant all that does not fit its ordering categories (Kaplan 1995; Merry 2000; Foucault 1977).⁴⁰⁸

Vilavilairevo was never part of the early 1900 colonial officials' '*tuka*

⁴⁰⁶ See the '*Tuka Movement*', which came into existence towards the end of the late 1870s through the inspiration of an oracle priest from the hill country of Viti Levu named Ndugomoi. Fearing the influence of Christian missionaries in Fiji, Ndugomoi renamed himself Navosavakandua ('he who speaks once') and proclaimed himself the supreme judge of all things who has power over life and death. He incurred the hostility of the European authorities by proclaiming the imminent return of the indigenous peoples and ancestors and the concomitant demise of the white settlers. He made miracles and granted immortality (*tuka*) to his followers. The colonial authorities found the *Tuka* movement heathen and criminal. Navosavakandua was arrested in 1885 and sentenced to six months hard labor and exile. In spite of the arrest of its leader, the movement continued to spread before entering into decline (see Kaplan 1988, 1989, 1990, 1995).

⁴⁰⁷ British colonial imagination of millenarianism in colonial Malawi and Zambia from 1900 to 1925 (Kaplan 1995); 16th-17th century Spanish men making Peruvian-Andean women into witches in an intertwined process of Catholic inquisition and the imposition of colonial state control (Silverblatt 1987 quoted in Kaplan 1989: 349); the 'invention' of witchcraft through inquisition in the Italian Friuli region in the 16th-17th centuries, when agrarian fertility rites were turned to satanic inversions of Catholic practice in the church's imagination (Ginzburg 1983 quoted in Kaplan 1989 *ibid.*).

⁴⁰⁸ I refer to Chapter 6 and 7 for a discussion of the use of the term 'folklore'.

witch hunt' which condemned the *luveniwai* (defined "intercourse with the water spirits", in Kaplan 1995: 68)⁴⁰⁹ and the *kalou rere* (defined "intercourse with the spirits of the forest", in Kaplan *ibid.*) heralding these practices "penal by Native Regulation" (Native Commissioner Russell quoted in Kaplan *ibid.*) an offence punished with flagellation (Thomson 1968[1908]: 171). Apart from empirical generalizations, different from the *luveniwai* and other blurred phenomena, the immunity to walk on hot stones in Beqa probably resisted up to today because it was never a ritual associated with war, cannibalism or other heathen practices progressively surveilled, criminalized and demolished by the colonial administration and the missionaries.

Interestingly, Thomas notices the contrast between the contribution of Catholic (French educated) and Protestant (British educated), missionaries. Catholic missionaries like de Marzan show in their writings an unparalleled interest in detailing esoteric rituals, beliefs, and customs. In the writings of the Wesleyan Methodist members on the other hand, Thomas notices "fewer purely discursive essays: generalized ethnographic description is found here and there in reports and correspondence (as well as in published mission histories and books like Williams' *Fiji and the Fijians*)" (Thomas 1987: 2).

However, neither Methodist nor Catholic missionary accounts about the Beqan people, show any hint for conceptualizing or associating the *vilavilavirevo* ceremony with demonic categories or activities, (see Reverend Cargill in Fiji from 1835-1840;⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁹ The *Tuka* Movement was defined "a return of heathenism with all its attendant practices (of which cannibalism is an essential feature)" (Native Commissioner Russell 14/6625, in Kaplan 1988: 143. 1995: 68-9).

⁴¹⁰ Reverend David Cargill arrived at Lakeba, Fiji on 12th October 1835.

Reverend Thomas Jaggar in Fiji from 1838-1848;⁴¹¹ Reverend Calvert in Fiji from 1838-1864 and in 1886;⁴¹² and Reverend Waterhouse⁴¹³ in Fiji from 1850-1857, 1859-1864 and 1874-1878;⁴¹⁴ de Marzan⁴¹⁵ in Fiji from 1893-1927; Rougier⁴¹⁶ in Fiji from 1888-nd). The *Wesleyan Missionary Notices* abound of notices and letters from the field denouncing heathenisms and dangerous beliefs like on January 9, 1860, when Reverend Wilson exorcized an old man in Bua who claimed that his god was a shark (Wilson 1860a: 170). However, as I said, *vilavilairevo* is never mentioned.

The earliest missionary account about *vilavilairevo* comes from Reverend Joseph Waterhouse, son of Reverend John Waterhouse appointed general superintendent of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission in Australia and Polynesia. Joseph Waterhouse is particularly remembered and credited for the conversion of Cakobau and for the

⁴¹¹ Reverend Thomas Jaggar arrived at Lakeba on 22nd December 1839

⁴¹² Reverend Calvert arrived at Lakeba, Fiji on 22nd December 1838.

⁴¹³ Reverend Joseph Waterhouse volunteered as a missionary to Fiji in 1849 where he worked from 1850-57. He went back to Fiji in 1859 as chairman of the district. Forced by ill health to leave Fiji in 1864, next year he was appointed to New Norfolk and served in Tasmania until 1870 when he moved to Victoria, ministering at Beechworth and Ballarat. In 1874, after its annexation to Britain, he returned to Fiji at the request of the Sydney Conference and took charge of the Training Institution at Navuloa until 1878 when he returned to Australia. He was drowned in the wreck of the *Tararua* off Dunedin on 29 April 1881 after visiting New Zealand (Australian Dictionary of Biography, online edition, accessed Jul. 1 2006).

⁴¹⁴ Garrett (1982) and Ravuvu (1997) assert that he arrived in Fiji in 1853.

⁴¹⁵ Jean de Marzan was a Marist Father (Society of Mary), a Roman Catholic religious congregation or order, founded in France in 1816 and approved by the Vatican in 1836. Their first mission outside France was the Vicariate Apostolic of western Oceania. The order arrived in Fiji in 1844.

⁴¹⁶ Father Emmanuel Rougier is a most interesting figure in the South Pacific history. Ordained abbot in 1888, left for Fiji where he became very active. “*Ratou [sic] ko Manuele na bete kalou*” (chief Manuel priest of God), as he wrote about himself in a letter to his parents (quoted in Boulagnon 2002: 36), he became soon very ‘independent’ from the hierarchy of the Marist Church. In a mysterious way he inherited from a New Caledonian convict a colossal fortune, which he used to purchase the islands of Fanning and Washington, subsequently sold in 1907 to buy the isle of Kiritimati (Christmas Island) where he built roads, villages and planted 800,000 coconuts, becoming a quasi-king. Excommunicated by the Marist order, he was controlling the alcohol cartel from the Pacific to North America. Retired in Tahiti, where he died in 1932, he became an important figure of its political and economic colonial milieu (Boulagnon 2002).

opposition to the Cession to Britain, making pressures on Colonel W. J. Smythe during his tour of the islands in 1859.⁴¹⁷ In his *The King and People of Fiji* Waterhouse makes clear that “the sorcerers are a class distinct from the priests [*bete*]. When application is made to effect the discovery of thieves, the sorcerer binds the soul of the suspected, throws them into his oven and bakes them” (Waterhouse 1997[1866]: 297). Of the *Vu-i-Beqa* (ancestral god of Beqa), and the *vilavilairevo* Waterhouse writes in lenient terms:

Vu-i-Beqa (Origin-of-the-island-of-Beqa)[sic] is a god of extensive renown and worship. He assumed various shrines. Once, when travelling under the appearance of an eel or serpent, he was discovered by a man, who determined to catch the eel for his dinner. But the creature concealed itself. The man dug and dug, until he came to a fence.

“fence yourself as you like,” said he, “you shall be mine.”

As he was about to secure his prize, the god expressed a wish to bargain for release.

“What will you give?” was the inquiry.

“Women,” said the god.

“No,” rejoined the man.

“Then food without the trouble of planting it.”

“No.”

At last the god promised him power over fire and besmeared the man’s body with its froth, imparting thereby the necessary power over the fiery element. Thus, the Beqa people make large fires and walk about in the midst of the burning element uninjured, when others cannot approach near the flames. Since they have embraced Christianity they have revealed the secret of their performance. In former times the natives thought the Beqa people equal to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. (Waterhouse 1997[1866]: 284-5)

In Chapter 2 I have attempted a brief literary analysis of the ritualized speech act (*mythos*) passed down orally (relabelled ‘legend’ of firewalking). My suggestion was that

⁴¹⁷ “On 27 April 1854 Waterhouse had an unusually long interview in private with the king [Cakobau], entreating him to take up his cross and renounce heathenism. On the following Sunday, 30 April, Cakobau, with his priest, more than forty wives, and his family, attended church on Bau. His submission was made. He cut down a sacred grove of iron-wood (*vesi* trees), took reading lessons, held family prayers in his house and placed himself under instruction for baptism. He put away all but one of his wives. Three years later, on 11 January 1857, he was baptized” (Garrett 1982: 88).

it is probable that the narrative of firewalking served the purpose to accommodate the evolution of Beqan culture, from an age of gods to an age when men and gods mingled freely, where the ‘gift’ exchanged between Tui Namoliwai and Tui Qalita sends a moral message to the whole community as previously hypothesized. What is relevant here is that the ‘gift’ (*isolisoli*) of *vilavilairevo* does not involve the negotiation of any evil power and it is not the result of evildoing. Chapter 2 has also discussed at length the hypotheses suggesting that the primary aim of religious rituals in traditional Oceania is apotropaic: the channeling of the influence of gods into areas of life where it would be useful and ‘away’ from those areas where it might be harmful.

The conclusions attained in Chapter 2 indicate that the *vilavilairevo* ceremony was originally a rite of increase, a thanksgiving ceremony (*na ka ga ni vakavinavinaka*) avulsed of any malevolent intent. An essential element of witchcraft is pouring out a libation of *yaqona* to the ancestors (Katz 1993; Kasuga 1994). *vilavilairevo*, *madrali* and the employment of the *waqabalabala* and *draunibalabala* in the performance do not involve the presentation or consumption of *yaqona* or *vakadraunikau* (witchcraft, literally ‘practicing sorcery with leaves’), *vakacuru* (willingful possession) or *vakatevoro* (unwillingful possession). An excerpt from my conversation with Apenisa Kuruiwaca, the *bete* from Naceva, well recapitulates the point.

Q: Can you tell me about the *madrali* for the *vilavilairevo*?

A: *Na madrali ga na vakalolo.*⁴¹⁸ *Ia na ka e vakadewataki tiko, ke sa caka na madrali kua bi vakacabori. Me caka ga ,caka sara na kana. E savasava ka sega ni vakatevoro, e cakaga ka ra sa kana na gone. Era sa kila tikoga ni ogo na ka ni vakavinvinaka nmi sa cava na solevu.*

⁴¹⁸ Commonly referred to as *vakalolo*, the pudding used for the *madrali* it is actually called *qalu* for it does not imply the use of any coconut milk.

The *vakalolo* prepared constitutes the *madrali*. However, the *vakalolo* should not be offered like a sacrifice. It is just be prepared and eaten straight away. Its preparation should not be associated with the devil or superstition for upon completion of preparation the children start eating straight away.

Q: What do you mean by ‘sacrifice’?

A: *Na ka ga ni vakavinavinaka, kua mada ga ni vakacabori.*

It is more like a thanksgiving, not a sacrifice.

Q: Why is it considere ‘*vakatevoro*’ by some?

A: No... the idea was brought about by the reverend [Maikeli Livani] thinking that the *madrali* was a sacrifice to the *kalou vu* [note the use of English to make sure I, *kaivalagi* understand]. *Dua nai tatau cakava vei au noqu momo levu koa, “nanuma vinaka tiko ke dua ena saga me vakatevoro takina na vilavilairevo era na kama kece na lewe ni vila. Kenai karua na vilavilairevo e dua ga na ka ni mamarau, mekemeke kei na kaikaila.*

A pledge made by my uncle [Semi Raikadra] was that: “remember well that if someone tries to demonise *vilavilairevo*, all *Vila[vilairevo]* descedants will burn. Secondly, *vilavilairevo* is closely associated with gaiety, dancing, coupled with yelling.

Q: Do you or your *dauvila* drink *yaqona* before the *vilavilairevo*?

A: *Na vilavilairevo e sega ni yaga kina na yaqona. Ke sega ni lose tu na yaqona me caka tu na vilavilairevo yabaki 100 e sega sara ni dua na kena leqa. Na yaqona e dau lose ga baleta ni dau oso tu na lewe ni vanua meda gunu yaqona me matau walega noda tiko. E sega ni yaga vua na vilavilairevo. Ia ke dua talega e cakava na yaqona me via vakatevoro taka nai revo ya era na kama taucoko na lewe ni vila. E ka savasava vakai koya ga. Ia nai otioti ni tatau, nanuma vinaka sara ni ko sa ena nomu i tutu ni bete kua ni lavakina e dua na kemu i sau dua ga na ka e soli vei iko ko iko na qai tukuna vinaka vakalevu. Me sa solia ga mai .Kua ni ko kaya qo na kemui sau qo e ka , ka .ka. Ko iko na gauna sa soli kina vei iko e dua na ka qai ciqoma.*

Yaqona is not a necessary element of the firewalking ceremony: if there would be no more *yaqona*, you’d still firewalk for hundred years without being harmed... *Yaqona* it’s just prepared because usually a lot people attend the firewalking ceremony... to make our gathering more formal, but it’s not part of firewalking. And if somebody tries to use *yaqona* to

gain evil power, then all the firewalkers will get burned. Firewalking is totally a positive ceremony. One last thing... in the position of a high priest: never demand for any money, whatever is given, just appreciate it, without saying this or that is my fee for the firewalking ceremony.⁴¹⁹

Early missionaries remained also indifferent to the renown ability of the Naivilaqata members to ‘heal’ burns. From my interviews with Methodist church officials and ministers emerged that not just they consider the gift of healing a gift from God characteristic of Fijian society, germane to several lineages, but most of them recurred to Beqan healers personally, or had memory of relatives injured by flames or heat getting cured. Interestingly, also a Pentecostal pastor, founder of the Fiji’s chapter of the Rescue Mission Ministries, while not agreeing on the nature of *vilavilairevo*, admitted that the healing from Beqa is not different in nature from the healing offered by his neighbour who is an eye-healer. His father was a healer too. “Healing is healing... A little girl in the [my] family... got burned on her face, the Beqa man came and touched her...” (Vatucila pers. comm.)⁴²⁰

With the assistance of Ulaiasi Davuke,⁴²¹ my guide at Namadi Heights, I discovered a whole community of healers, eye, back, bones, stomach, mostly females not using *yaqona*. A question I posed to all of them was where to go in case of burns. They unanimously replied: Beqa. To all of them I asked if they saw any ‘difference’ between the Beqan healers and the urban healers like themselves, but their unanimous reply was that there is no difference. Beqan healers, like them, have a ‘gift’.

In several occasions I was able to observe the *bete*’s healing ‘technique’ (hotel

⁴¹⁹ Interview Dec. 1 2004 h.12:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa (Trans. by Laisiasa Cavakiqali).

⁴²⁰ Interview Apr. 21 2005 h. 9:30, Namadi Hights, Suva.

⁴²¹ Ulaiasi is one of the field-researchers chosen for the Fiji-National Inventory Project described in Chapter 6.

kitchen staff members arriving with burned hands, arms, hotel guests with massive sunburns, members of the other villages with all different kind of scalds, burns, and myself too a couple of times). The procedure is quick and simple and resembles more the New Age prana⁴²² energy healing techniques borrowed from Eastern medicine.⁴²³ However, instead of manipulating the patient's energy centers (chakras), it is just a 'laying of hand', a 'touch' (*tara*) from the *bete*, like Reverend Vatucila explains above. Miriama Naioro a Naivilaqata descendant from Dakuibeqa makes it even more simple:

Ni dua e kama vaqo, na gauna ga o tara kina, veitalia e kama levu tu vakacava, ena oti ga. Kevaka e sega ni dua e tara, ena mavoa. Oya talega e dua na yaga ni vilavilairevo. O au madaga ke dua na tikiq e kama, au sa rawa ni tara ga, sa oti na kama.

If one has been burnt, whenever we touch it, never mind the severity, it is completely healed... If no one touches it, it will become worse and becomes infected. This is another positive aspect of *vilavilairevo*. I can even heal a burn on my own body, and it is completely healed. (Naioro pers. comm.)⁴²⁴

It is evident that these kind of natural sicknesses, burns, eye injuries, arthritis etc., are *tauvimate dina* ('true' or 'real sickness') having a different etiology than *tauvimate vakatevoro* (sickness caused by the work of the devil). 'Spiritual sicknesses' requires a 'spiritual healer' (*dauvagunu*, literally 'one who is expert at drinking *yaqona*') (Katz 1993: 59), which is not what the *bete* do. In some cases church ministers had demanded people to give up their indigenous medicines as the instrument of Satan (see Katz, 1993: 239). But this is not the case of the *bete*. Asking the *bete* to give up their healing power over burns was not on the agenda of the 2002-2003 *veivakasavasavataki*, nor on that of the evangelical 'revolution' in Rukua. Beqa's 'burns-healers' (Naivilaqata *mataqali*) are

⁴²² Prana is a Sanscrit word meaning vital energy or life force.

⁴²³ E.g., yoga, or the reiki, johrei, qi-gong, therapeutic touch, healing touch and polarity therapies.

⁴²⁴ Interview Dec. 22 2004 h.9:15, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

never referred to as *dauvagunu*, or *daurairai* ('one who is expert as seeing [into the unseen]), *dauveibo* ('one who is expert at massage'), or *dausoliwai* (one who is expert at giving herbal medicines'). All of these *vuniwai vakaviti* ('Fijian doctors') in fact draw their 'power' from their ancestral gods (*vu*) (see Katz 1993).

Beqa burns-healers, famous for their *tara* ('touch') are called instead *dauveivakabulai* ('one who is expert at helping recovering from illness') and do not need to mediate their healing power through the *vu*. Thus, it is also incorrect and simplistic assuming after Katz's old mentor, Ratu Noa, that the *dauvagonu* have taken over this function from the *bete* for "members of the priestly clan could no longer be relied on to follow the straight path merely because of their birth; they no longer enjoyed special access to healing knowledge having violated the trust of their relationship with the *Vu*" (Katz 1993: 210-1; see also Strathern 2002: 18).

While *vu* and *mana*, including the power to heal ('straight path') have become partly blended with, partly superseded by, the notion about the Christian God, the stamp of the 'devil worship' (*vakatevoro*), especially in urban areas is becoming pervasive and arrogantly trenchant in respect of the holistic function of traditional beliefs and practices. From an etiological point of view the amputation of the *madrali* from the *vilavilairevo* ceremony undermines the whole syntax of the ritual depriving it of its semantic meaning. What is more alarming, is that from a sociological point of view, the recent developments in Rukua, swept by a fundamentalist Christian revival, indicates how effortlessly and abruptly the stamp of *vakatevoro* can mark with infamy a whole community, instilling perplexity, leaving a permanent scar on the practitioners' morality, their kin group, and the Fijian community at large. Re-branded, the surviving ritual performance changes,

assuming the liminoid characteristics discussed in the next chapter, over time destined to bend to the point of denying its fundamental issues and its implicit inner normative cultural codes.

Conclusion

The discussion above leads to the hypothesis that church ministers should be considered ‘agents’, or ‘middlemen’ (see Hashimoto 1989: 1) in this process of change. It remains yet to explain *how* Fijians believing in a particular kind of supernatural agency could shift their belief system toward newly introduced religions. In addition, preliterate oral religions often lack of structured, coherent theology remaining organized in heterogeneous grains of knowledge and contingent acts of behaviour. Using a metaphor employed by Boyer in his theories of religious cognitive development, it seems that the mind requires two basic functions called by Boyer respectively: ‘representation-attorneys’ and the ‘belief-judge’. The ‘attorneys’ produces representations with their connections, claims and justifications for the mental judge, who considers them and hands over the verdict. Some representations ‘win’ their case. Some are ‘dismissed’ as ‘unbelievable’ (Boyer 2001: 303).

In 19th century Fiji, the politico-economic momentum played a decisive role in the cognitive development of the new religion. Kaplan observes that Christianity has been of fundamental importance in the transformation of Fiji in its process to colonization and independence. The ‘change’, she writes “is from a cultural system based on the principles of ‘land’ and ‘chiefs’ existing in a diachronic and synthetic relationship to each other, to a more rigid, centralized, and reified hierarchical system, existing at the new ‘national’

level of Fiji” (Kaplan 1990: 142). Fijians’ indigenous cosmological system had no central deity, but an interchangeable pantheon of deities. Fijians’ predisposition for concepts of invisible supernatural agents and for rules to be obeyed (taboo morality) allowed missionaries introducing Jesus Christ as the unalterable head of the hierarchy of Fijian deities, bringing to the system a new type of hierarchy and fixed it (see Kaplan 1990: 142). The centrality of Ratu Jisu (Jesus Christ),⁴²⁵ *Na Kalou ko Jiova* (Lord Jehovah), or more simply *Na Kalou* (*the Spirit [God]*), occurred through a subtle transformation of the present revealing and reinforcing the Fijian past (see Toren 1988).

More precisely, the Methodist church reinforced the typical Fijian ideology: subordinating younger people to those who had gained wisdom through mastery of a body of traditional knowledge, where rank within the church reflects rank outside it (Brison 2002); paralleling Fijian spatial organization inside the church similar to that of ordinary Fijian houses (Toren 1990); juxtaposing pre-Christian Fijian social life, seasons and symbols to the Old Testament (Tippett 1980; Tuwere 2002); linking biblical accounts of the Israelites’ land of Yahweh to the Fijian land (Tuwere 2002), and referring traditional *mana* to the divine nourishment of the Judeo-Christian tradition (Tomlinson forthcoming); creating remarkable similarities between gift-giving rituals and church services (Miyazaki 2000: 42); and finally establishing a strong association between *Imago Dei* (the ‘image’ of God) and *vanua*⁴²⁶ (Kaplan 1990; Abramson 2000; Tuwere 2002; Tomlinson 2002a, 2002b).

This sudden shift in the belief system—more abrupt in the case of the Pentecostal

⁴²⁵ The term Christ is employed here in accordance to its original Latin-Greek etymology *Christos*/Χριστός, (‘Messiah’).

⁴²⁶ *Vanua* is used here in its meaning of mythical, ancestral land, and identity.

churches—undermines the fact that autochthonous spiritual beliefs inevitably reflect people's ethos, symbols, emblems, myths, kinship system and the social structure of the community in which develops (*inter alia* Durkheim 1912; Hogbin 1958; Lévi-Strauss 1962; Geertz 1973; Asad 1993). Adopting a Geertzian metaphor, both Methodist and Pentecostal churches in Fiji brought in the religious discourse valid 'motivations' but ignored the 'moods'. Geertz explains that "motivations are made meaningful with reference to the ends towards which they are conceived to conduce, whereas moods are made meaningful with reference to the conditions from which they are conceived to spring", in other words, their 'sources' (Geertz 1973: 97).

Maintaining a nomothetic approach, the opening anecdote and the arguments introduced in this chapter, suggest to confine the analysis not in the superhuman itself, but in those beliefs in the superhuman and unseen world, recognizing the historical, psychological and social relation of those beliefs. The opening anecdote, re-examined under a Geertzian thick lens, show that particular beliefs are a "gloss upon the mundane world of social relationship and psychological events" which they shape (Geertz 1973: 124). Thus, following Geertz's argument that the Azande would view apparent 'accidents' as not accidents at all, but a means to learn how to react against the agent that caused them (Geertz *ibid.*), an unusual 'heaviness' of the boat returning to Dakuibeqa after a trip to the Namoliwai and a tormented night of the group camping at Sese reveal the presence of existential beliefs related to a causal connection between certain kinds of actions and their likely consequences (see Howard 1996: 139-140).

Nottingham observes that the sharing of beliefs implies that the relationship of the group to the sacred beings part of the unseen world is in some way intimately connected

with the group's moral values (Nottingham 1971: 20), an argument discussed at length by Kant in his *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1998[1793]). Religion studies stress the interdependency of the moral values of the respective worlds of sacred and human beings, particularly significant when these relationships are thought of as kinship ones, which are kept alive by repetition and transmission (*inter alia* Nottingham 1971; Durkheim 1995[1912]). The point is that beliefs (creeds and myths) and practices (ceremonies and rituals) 'exist' because are continually renewed and kept alive by the worshippers (Nottingham 1971:17).

Thus, the Wesleyan Church intervention through defensive rituals (*veivakasavasavataki, masu sema*) does not erase these beliefs, but simply "revalues those presences as 'demonic' ... Yet 'powerless' ritual participants perpetuate their own senses of powerlessness and give new leases on life to the 'demons' that afflict them" (Tomlinson 2004a: 7, 13). Tomlinson observes that in doing so "the missionaries helped to create a sense of historical rupture between a dangerous past and a present that had to engage with, and defuse dangers from that past (Tomlinson *ibid.*).

Building on Tomlinson (2002, 2004a, 2004b), Christianity's historical force is generative of its own terror. As in the old formula *primus in orbe deos fecit timor*, religious ideas have been always attributed to moods and feelings of fear, weakness and subjection (see Durkheim 1995[1912]). In contrast to the moral tolerance of the pre-Christian religion, people see the 'stigma' which Christianity attached to their pagan beliefs and to some traditional practices (see Firth 1970: 316). If on the one hand Christian rituals that create a sense of powerlessness are, counterintuitively, particularly effective in defusing danger, on the other hand these palliative rituals designed to abolish

innocuous ritual practices like the *madrali*, perpetuate a sense of inadequacy leaving their participants perplexed about the ‘true’ truth and impoverished about their powerful past. Curiously, whereas the *madrali* has been substituted by a prayer to God, the pagan (pan-Oceanic) taboos accompanying the ceremony—in Beqa like in Tahiti—are still there, untouched. *Tabu* (taboos) appear sharing the same share of sacredness of *mana*, and meet the Christian ethics.⁴²⁷

As a result, aspects of the *vilavilavevo* ceremony, sensationalized by the Colonial administration (see next chapter) and forgiven by the Christian church in the past, have been recently censured and condemned as one of the last emblematic bastions of indigenous heathenism. The rituals of spiritual renewal and reconciliation occurred in Dakuibeqa between 2002 and 2003 index changes in the beliefs and morals which came with Christianity and index implicit changes in the cultural forms through which those messages are communicated at village level. Until a ‘Pentecostal fever’ will arise splitting and dividing further people’s moods and motivations, possibly banning the *vilavilavevo* ceremony like in Rukua, the descendants of the Naivilaqata priestly clan in Dakuibeqa will appeal to God incessantly. Incessantly, they will seat around drinking kava, keeping core beliefs from their (demonized) past muted but present, or ‘quiescent’ as Firth foresees (1957[1936]: 45), or ‘camouflaged’ as Howard suggests (1996: 143), relabeled and stigmatized.

⁴²⁷ Probably *encouraging* in the case of *vilavilavevo* some fasting and occasional sex and kava moderation.

CHAPTER 5

Agents of Change, Part II: Tourism and Commodification

Introduction: Seeing is Believing (And Authenticating)

Watch very closely ladies and gentleman, they are walking on top of the fire, for those with cameras, please don't block the views of those sitting behind you, yes, you can come and take a close shot, take a close shot of the firewalking ceremony, see the unbelievable: the fire walkers of Fiji, your shot proving to the world they can walk on fire without getting burned. Seeing is believing, you watch very closely, just like putting some thing on the hot plate, but they never get burned, no burns, they are gifted to walk on fire without getting burned. Seeing is believing, than believe what you see... We have a heap of green leaves by the pit, those green leaves will later be thrown into the pit at the end of the performances and that, if you don't believe it, if you don't believe what you are seeing, as they performing the ceremony of fire walking, the screenage will prove it to you that the pit is hot, ladies and gentleman... *Vinaka, vinaka, vakalevu.*⁴²⁸

For those who would like to take photos you can move in a little bit closer, take a quick one... move in closer, but not too close! These men haven't had a white man for years... one white man was cooked in this kind of pit, that was long time ago, the missionary Mr. Thomas Baker, if you go to the [Fiji] Museum, I don't mean to offend people... keep smiling! That was long time ago! [audience laughing] If you go to the museum you will only see a bit of the sole of his shoes, the cannibals they ate his shoes too, good chewing gum! [audience laughing] Ladies and gentleman please lets put our hands together for the Beqa firewalkers of Fiji [audience clapping] *Bula! Bula!* [audience continues clapping] For those who haven't had your dinner don't forget to ask for tonight's special meal at the restaurant: it's called 'barbecue feet' [audience laughing and clapping] *Bula!* Lets put our hands together for the priest of the firewalk! [audience clapping] *Bula!* Ok, at the end of the show, would you like to have a feel of their feet? Have a feel of their feet! [audience clapping and shouting *Bula!*].⁴²⁹

This chapter examines how culture, taste and values may function to legitimate the power of dominant cultural and social forces and what impacts these have on traditional cultural expressions. While a preoccupation with 'authenticity' has motivated

⁴²⁸ 'Big Josh' Turagakele, The Fijian Shangri-La Resort, March 18, 2005, h. 19:00.

⁴²⁹ Elaisa 'Junior' Cavu, Naviti Resort, March 23, 2005, h. 18:30.

much of the contemporary writing on tourism, the issue, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Bruner (1992) observe, is less one of ‘authenticity’ and more one of ‘authentication’; that is, who has the power to represent whom? Said (1979), Foucault (1980), Appadurai (1986), Marcus (1995) and others suggest that the power to represent or to consume other cultures is a form of ‘domination’. Sarup notes that for Foucault (1980), power “‘produces reality’; it ‘produces domains of objects and rituals of truth’,” and concludes that “it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power” (Sarup 1993: 74).

Inside the enclavic tourist space, the authentication process begins the moment stage managers and emcees such as ‘Big Josh’ Tuaragakele or ‘Junior’ Cavu brand the Sawau performance for the audience and confirm that it is intact and has integrity. However, the process of authenticating and translating the ritual performance into touristic language and experience is a metacultural process that begins far back behind the stage areas, creating the demand for future circulations and experiences. ‘Big Josh’ and ‘Junior’ remain inside the ethical boundaries dictated by Fijian custom while eliciting the authenticity embedded in tourists’ fantasies of exotic Fiji. Only on rare occasions do ‘Big Josh’ and ‘Junior’ and other presentation managers suggest minor changes to the performance or costumes, even though they are the first to receive audience reactions.⁴³⁰

Communications between artists and consumers are indirect. The mass dissemination of visual messages about cultural products in Fiji and other exotic destinations contributes to a dialogic construction of a meta-culture of newness: the ‘new’ cultural identity of peoples who are visited by tourists (Urban 2001). Tourism controls, authenticates and renegotiates local cultural products. Through feedback

⁴³⁰ Other presentation managers include Koroi Sivinia at the The Fijian-Shangri-La, Emosi Bukasoqosoqo at the Beqa Lagoon Resort, and Mark Rovonokula at the Hideaway Resort.

between the market and cultural producers, local cultural expressions are becoming increasingly adapted to the tastes of the audience. Opinion formers control the politics of world tourism and marketing; distant from the stage, they alter local realities and unleash change in the relationship between hosts and guests.

Aesthetics should be framed by anthropologists as a problem of communication and power rather than ‘taste’. The authentication process happens outside ‘Bourdieuian space’ and not just inside enclavic tourist spaces. It occurs in the global media-space and cyberspace’s ‘global village’, where individuals are not organized according to their accumulated wealth or tastes and where utopian cultural tourism and exotic voyeurism can be virtually practiced by anybody. Nakamura observes that:

When natives stop acting like natives—that is to say, when they deviate from the stereotypes that have been set up to signify their identities—their ‘aura’ is lost: they are no longer ‘authentic’. Thus, a rationale for the existence of racial cybertypes becomes clear: in a virtual environment like the Internet where *everything* is a copy, so to speak, and nothing has an aura since all cyberimages exist as pure pixellated information, the desire to search for an original is thwarted from the very beginning. Hence the need for images of cybertyped ‘real natives’ to assuage that desire. (Nakamura 2002: 6; emphasis in original)⁴³¹

Anthropology has long noted the impact of money and commodification of labor on cultural aspects of colonized societies (Dominguez 1986). Contemporary arguments over the protection of indigenous cultural property assert that the integrity of native heritage must be defended from the corrupting influence of alien categories (Brown 2003a: 208). In these new, altered realities, the native artist/performer has to respond to a distant alien aesthetic. This distance generates the perception of a gap between the newly conceived cultural product and the expectations of the audience.

⁴³¹ See Figures 5.1 and 5.2 for examples of such ‘cybertyped’ images.

This chapter does not address this problem in general, but fundamental aspects of it: how the global circulation of tourist commodities influences cultural products and performances such as the *vilavilavevo* and how tourism *reaches* and *changes* the relationship between the cultural products and the society that produces them.



Figure 5.1 Collage of 'authenticating' opinions about *vilavilavevo* available on the Internet (made by the author).

Colonial Gaze and Astute Impresarios: The Commodification of Fijian Firewalking

Early colonial accounts indicate that the ceremony was being performed to entertain colonial representatives and foreign dignitaries visiting Fiji by the end of the nineteenth century (Allardyce 1904; Haggard 1903; Hocken 1898; Jackson 1899; NM 1885; Lindt 1893; Thomson 1894). In particular, in 1885 and 1892, the ceremony was

performed before the Vice-Regal party, a few colonial officials, the Roko Tui Dreketi, various chiefs from Viti Levu and five hundred natives. As speculated by Bigay et al. (1981) and Crosby (1988a), it is possible that the village or villages involved received some form of compensation from Thurston's government, although neither Lindt (1893: 51) nor Hocken (1898: 668) mention recompense.⁴³²

All accounts mention the name of the native intermediary who arranged for *vilavilairevo* to be exhibited: Jonacani Dabea, the Turaga-ni-Lewa i Taukei mai Rewa (Native Stipendiary Magistrate of Rewa), a *bete* originally from Rukua village in Beqa (CF 1907; Lindt 1893; NM 1885; Thomson 1984). Whether the first colonial officials who traveled to Beqa to witness the *vilavilairevo* emulated the grand voyages of Stendhal or were simply tourists, Jonacani Dabea can be seen as the first impresario of the *vilavilairevo* spectacle. According to Rukuan elder Aporosa Bulivou, firewalking exhibitions were not yet deterritorialized and commercialized at the time a group of firewalkers from Rukua and Dakuibeqa was invited to participate in the New Zealand International Exhibition held in Christchurch in November 1905. They performed nine times under the guidance of Dakuibeqa's *bete* Sevanaia Waqasaqa⁴³³ and Rukua's *bete* Mesui Toganiyadrava;⁴³⁴ Tui Sawau Ratu Peceli Vitauditoga also participated (Aporosa Bulivou, recorded by Mika Tubanavau in 1978, quoted in Crosby 1988a: 68).

As a result of missionary and colonial activity and education, money became a main factor of change in Pacific island economies as people pursued wealth and prestige. Boyd (1986), for example, argues that the emergence of the *singsing bisnis* in PNG's

⁴³² John Bates Thurston was acting British Honorary Consul in 1867 and became the Governor of Fiji in 1888.

⁴³³ *Tikina* Sawau, *Yavusa* Sawau, *Mataqali* Naivilaqata, *itokatoka* Naivilaqata.

⁴³⁴ *Tikina* Sawau, *Yavusa* Naduruvesi, *Mataqali* Matanivanua, *itokatoka* Nadoya. He was close kin with Jonacani Dabea.

Eastern Highlands should be understood within the context of post-colonial tourist pressures that radically altered the political economy of the region. However, in his ethnography of Truk, Goodenough observes that labor is traditionally treated by the Trukese as non-productive corporeal property, making it a commodity similar to other kinds of commodities (Goodenough 1978[1951]: 56).

Fijian scholar Nayacakalou observes that traditionally, all the activities involved in commodity production can be fit into the pattern of the household and village economy. Routine activities regulating village life and authority structures remain intact. Ironically, he points out that if members of the village choose wage labor over commodity production, the consequences may be disruptive as village households are reduced to economic dependence on family members working in town or abroad. In these cases of external employment, the authority structure and social organization of the village is severely affected (Nayacakalou 1978: 138).

The Fijian village economy differs from capitalist economy, so commodification is not the best term for explaining the monetization of the *vilavilavevo* ceremony. Diachronically, it appears to have been a innocuous economic process. It allows the whole community to be engaged, while preserving and emphasizing the authority structure and traditional knowledge of the social order and socio-cultural relationships (*kila ni bula vakaveiwekani kei naitovo*) as the chief, the Tui Sawau, and the Naivilaqata *turaga ni matataqali* (head of the priestly clan) direct the mode and volume of production. As discussed in Chapter 3, in a Fijian village, labor is not perceived as an economic service, but as a social one. The specialized activity of firewalking quickly became equivalent to - and sometimes suppressed – other economic activities such as

planting (*teitei*) *dalo* or fishing (*qoli*), since the latter are small-scale, direct forms of production resulting in minimal accumulation of wealth. While tourism is an extension of commodification, according to the ontology of labor in Fijian village *vilavilavevo* is treated as a *sui generis* commodity, for its survival and well-being depends on it.

The Melanesian concept of '*bisnis*' is similar but not identical to the western concept of 'business' (Boyd 1985; Finney 1973; A. Strathern 1972). Beqa entrepreneurship related to the *vilavilavevo* ceremony represents a small scale cash-generating enterprise which is expected to yield substantial long-term financial returns to the participants and their kin. Unlike Papua New Guinea's *singsing*, the returns and prestige accumulated with the *vilavilavevo* in Beqa are communally shared. However, a tendency toward more self-interest endeavors, '*bisinisi* style', emerged in the early 1970s among a new category of entrepreneurs and promotional agents. These firewalk impresarios controlled, created and authenticated, either from the inside or the outside, the performing groups of the Sawau community.

Rukua

In the 1950s, a new wave of tourism arrived in Fiji. Rukua village was the first of the Sawau villages to perform at the Hibiscus Festival in Suva in 1958. In those years, Rukuan Peceli Vitukawalu, grandchild of *bete* Mesui Toganiyadrava, became the first true impresario of the *vilavilavevo* ceremony in Fiji and abroad. As Beqa's mailperson, he had developed the communicative skills necessary to establish powerful contacts on and outside the island. In 1961, more than 14,000 tourists arrived in Fiji; an additional 60,000 stopped over during their flights elsewhere (Harrison and Brandt 2003: 140). That year, Vitukawalu won the first contract with Northern Hotels to hold a monthly show at

their beach property, the Korolevu Beach Hotel. He was paid FJD400.00 per show.

Vitukawalu performed with the Rukua group and once acted as a *bete*. His uncle (*tamana lailai*) *bete* Kelepi Biu, father of Aporosa Bulivou, who had gone on the tour to New Zealand in 1905, had passed him the gift of *vilavilavirevo* (Vitukawalu pers. comm.)⁴³⁵ In 1969, through Northern Hotels, he received an invitation to participate in two festivals in Napier and Auckland in New Zealand, where he and his uncle brought forty-five performers from Rukua. They visited again in 1973 and 1981. In 1974, Rukua was chosen to host a special *vilavilavirevo* ceremony for Prince Charles, who visited Dakuibeqa and Rukua, where he was welcomed at the village's shores by Peceli Vitukawalu. Two years later, Vitukawalu organized the first performance in Hawai'i in collaboration with the East West Center. He dug a large firewalking pit inside the stadium at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and later brought group to perform at the Polynesian Cultural Center in the evening.

Contracts with hotels on Viti Levu multiplied. Vitukawalu became known as the first 'ambassador' of Fijian firewalking in Fiji and abroad. He was astute at interpreting the requests of hotel directors, stage managers and travel agents. He was the first to permit two people outside the Sawau tribe to perform: a chief from the village near Korolevu⁴³⁶ and his brother-in-law Aporosa from Kadavu (Vitukawalu pers. comm.)⁴³⁷

Despite his involvement with the growing tourist industry, he told me that he was always careful to observe the correct ritual steps before, during and after the staged ceremonies:

⁴³⁵ Vitukawalu, interview Feb. 10 2005 h. 14:00, Suva.

⁴³⁶ Tevita Dikedike, *yavusa* Davatukia.

⁴³⁷ Interview Feb. 10 2005 h. 14:00, Suva.

The people who are doing the announcement say, “Now the *bete* is going to go in [the *lovo*].” They will say that, but the *bete* has to do a good job... *Kila* [smartly] being a *bete*, you have to perform well, but you don’t have to sit on the stones, simply walk across. (Vitukawalu pers. comm.)⁴³⁸

On one occasion, he experienced the painful consequences of disobeying his uncle’s orders: he burned his feet during a performance and ended up confined to bed for months. Vitukawalu certainly contributed to the internationalization of the Sawau tribe’s exotic ceremony but never degraded it to a circus performance.

In the early 1970s, Fijis’ gross tourists receipts exceeded the value of sugar, copra and gold combined, representing more than 94% of total domestic value (Rajotte 1978: 10). Between 1961 and 1981, the income received from performing firewalking ceremonies was more than FJD600.00 per month in Rukua alone, allowing the villagers to build houses and carry out other village projects. The timing was good for contacting the Minister of Communications, Works and Tourism, so in 1971, Peceli Vitukawalu wrote asking for financial help to build a protective sea wall to reclaim some of the land that was being washed away. His letter cunningly played the authenticity and tourism cards:

Sir, we have been killing two birds with one stone with our performances. Firstly, we are attracting tourists to the Colony to see this unique ceremony, hence bringing money to the Colony. Secondly, we are trying to get some money for our proposed project. The money we are getting [performing firewalking] will probably take ten years to accumulate at the rate we are going, in order to reach the estimated \$F40,000.⁴³⁹ Therefore we request the Government to lend us some financial help. (Vitukawalu quoted in Lipton 1972: 90)⁴⁴⁰

The story of the commercialization of firewalking in Rukua ends in the early eighties

⁴³⁸ Interview Feb. 10 2005 h. 14:00, Suva.

⁴³⁹ FJD 40,000 was equivalent to USD20,000 at the time.

⁴⁴⁰ The letter was shared with photojournalist Shereé Lipton, guest of Vitukawalu, on assignment in Beqa, who published an excerpt of it the year it was written.

when the Pentecostal Church eradicated firewalking in that village.

Dakuibeqa

In the 1950s, Dakuibeqa was also becoming a tourist contact zone and bringing the *vilavilavirevo* ceremony to the hotels of Viti Levu. Half a century earlier, Dakuibeqa villagers occasionally performed at the Grand Pacific Hotel, Albert Park, Thurston Botanical Gardens, Fiji Museum, and Government House. Like Rukua, the chiefly village of Dakuibeqa did not have a problem getting engagements. In 1953, Dakuibeqa's firewalkers were called to escort Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh on a special Tasmanian Empire Limited Airways flight from Suva to Auckland. A group of selected firewalkers, mostly from the *mataqali* Naivilaqata, accompanied by the Tui Sawau Ratu Aca Naborisi and his nephew Ratu Timoci Matanitobua, performed the *vilavilavirevo* for them in Fiji and New Zealand.⁴⁴¹

Joketani Cokanasiga explained that Dakuibeqa had ties with the central government because Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, considered the founding father of the modern nation of Fiji, married Ro Litia Cakobau Lalabalavu Katoafutoga Tuisawau, better known as Ro Lady Lala, who had a close relationship with the Tui Sawau's family.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴¹ The firewalkers included: Semi Raikadra (*bete levu*), Lepani Bose, Pita Koroisavulevu ('Pita Tukana'), Penieli Racolo, Juta Delaibataki, Marika Tivitivi, Sevanaia Waqasaqa, Asivarusi Naicovitabua, Jolame Dabea, Timoci Ratuniuravu, Saiasi Ratudina, Epi Nasaudrodro, Joketani Ratuyaqoni, Esala Ratulevu, Nimilote Ratudina, Apenisa Kuruiwaca, Vilimoni Qaranivalu and Ratu Wame Belolevu.

⁴⁴² After Beqa was conquered by Rewa in 1839, the Tui Sawau family acknowledged that they were the subjects of Roko Tui Dreketi, the paramount chief of Rewa Province and the Burebasaga Confederacy, to which Beqa belongs (France 1969: 82; Wilkes 1845: 82-3). When the *masi* [title] of the Tui Sawau was returned to Beqa, the Roko Tui Dreketi (Ratu Timoci Tavanavanua) and the Tui Sawau *ratu*, Peceli Vitaukitoga, agreed that in commemoration the Tui Dreketi's surname would be changed to one word, Tuisawau. All of Roko Tui Dreketi's descendents maintain the Tuisawau surname. Ro Lady Lala Mara inherited the title from her father Ratu George Cokanautu

Dakuibeqa, the acknowledged home of *Vila*[*vilairevo*] was always closely associated to the Ministry of Fijian Affairs thanks to Ratu Mara and his wife Adi Lala. Ratu Mara established a *vila* village fund for the domestic shows and I was the Trustee. What happened is that the firewalkers complained about both their financial and status recognition, thus the housing project took place under the direct superintendence of Ratu Mara, at that time Administrative District Officer in Navua. About ten houses were built with the village fund. I was personally going to Dakuibeqa all the time. (Cokanasiga pers. comm.)⁴⁴³

In 1972, Dakuibeqa's firewalkers were invited to perform at the 72nd Asia Trade Show in New Delhi, accompanied by Jocketani Cokanasiga and Ratu Mara's brother Ratu Lefoni Uluilakeba. The trip was sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Fiji Visitors Bureau "as a promotional venue" (Cokanasiga pers. comm.)⁴⁴⁴

Dakuibeqa then signed contracts with a variety of hotels such as the aristocratic Grand Pacific Hotel, backpacker places such as the Sunnyside Villa run by Unaisi Matalau and the Fishermen's Lodge outside Suva at Togalevu.⁴⁴⁵

Ratu Mara's protection gradually vanished as Fiji faced its first post-independence election in 1972. Pita Koroisavulevu ('Pita Tukana'), described in Chapter 3 as the most subversive, versatile *bete* of the firewalking ceremony, was the first one

Tuisawau, from 1974 until her death in 2004. She was succeeded by her younger sister, Ro Teimumu Vuikaba Tuisawau Kepa, who was the Minister for Education in the Qarase government, then was elected in May 2006 as a Member for the Serua Fijian Communal Constituency for the SDL party (Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua).

⁴⁴³ Interview July 9 2005 h. 13:00, Suva. Cokanasiga was formerly an officer of the Fiji Visitors Bureau, then went into politics and served as the Minister for Public Works and Energy (2000-2001) and Minister of Home Affairs (2001-2004).

⁴⁴⁴ Interview July 9 2005 h. 13:00, Suva.

⁴⁴⁵ The call for the exotic in the aftermath of the two World Wars had gradually shifted from a form of celebration of imperial rule to a nostalgic Orientalism. Otherness was slowly disenfranchising itself from raw forms of evolutionism. Cultural tourists were already in search of novel attractions. The 'human showcases' that impressed those who went to the St. Louis Exposition of 1904 or the famous firewalkers from Beqa who shocked the visitors to Christchurch's International Exhibition in 1905 were not becoming passé, but it was a time for tourists to explore the backstage regions of the Earth.

inclined to accommodate tourism's fantasies. Instead of the usual parade of male firewalkers, the manager of the Fishermen's Lodge asked him to bring some village women. Miriama Naioro, one of the women, recalled those times:

Era a vinakata ga na kai valagi se vakacava "rawa ni dou vila na marama", qai tukuna noqu momo o Pita Tukana, "e rawa ni keimami na kena dau.

Tourists wondered if women could perform the *Vila[vilairevo]* and my uncle, Pita Tukana, replied: "Of course they can, for we are the custodians."

I asked her if women immediately accepted the invitation to participate. She replied:

Sa vakaro ga mai. Au sa vinakata talega meu vila. Keimami dau vinakata me keimami vila mera raica na kaivalagi. Keitou qai vila tiko i Togalevu (Fishermen's Lodge) voleka yani i Suva o koya na koro dau caka tiko kina na vila ni kua. Ya na vanua ratou dou vila tiko kina na Turaga ike(Dakuibeqa). Sa qai vinakati me vila talega na marama, keitou mani vila tiko kina e vica na marama. Keitou lewe 5 se 6 na marama eke bau dua toka vei ira ko au. Na kena vuna saraga oya ni a vinakati me vila eso na marama eke, bau dua ko au.

It's a directive [Pita Tukana] made which had to be followed. I also wanted to perform the *Vila[vilairevo]*. We wanted to perform the *Vila[vilairevo]* so tourists could see it. We did our *Vila[vilairevo]* at Togalevu [Fishermen's Lodge], close to Suva, the village where *Vila[vilairevo]* is performed until today. That's the place where men from Dakuibeqa usually do the *Vila[vilairevo]*. Women were asked to perform the *Vila[vilairevo]*, but there were not many of us. There were about five or six women including myself. The reason behind this was basically that they wanted some women to perform the *Vila[vilairevo]* and I was one of them.

I asked her if Pita Tukana's new 'directive' had some antecedent in the history of the *vilavilairevo*, in other words if it was culturally appropriate to have women performing the ceremony, usually reserved for the Sawau men. She replied:

Au sa bau kila ga ni dau vila ga na noqu Na. O koya e qase ka gone o tamai Samu. Noqu Na na tinana mai Rewa, mai Vutia. Dua na tavalena

dina dau lako tu ga mai vua eke. E liu dau tu na vale vakaviti levu, dau dua na matadravu levu dau tu ena kubu e cake. Veisiga kece e dau caudre tu ga kina na buka, ia o noqu Na se qai qasiqasi voli ia o nona tavale ga o noqu Bu rau sa qai veisisivi italanoa kei noqu Bu, qo me vaka rau sota tiko o Beqa vata kei Rewa. Sa qai tukuna mai na turaga ni Rewa qo “Dua na siga noqu lako mai wai mai Vutia, I wai na yacana o Laucala I yasana ki na yanuyan qo o Nukulau. Dua na qari levu e tubu kina, na qari levu qo na lailai madaga nio laveta cake vaqo sega saraga ni laurai o Beqa.” Sa tukuna sara mai o noqu Tai “Oi, sa dua dina na qari vakaitamera! Ia, qo mo sa na qai raici au kina. O au qo dua na ka au na kaya vei iko.” Sa qai vakayalaca vinaka sara na buka, na qilaiso ga sa waqa tu. Sa qai huvata laivi na pikini nei noqu Na kei na nona isulu kece, sa qai kaya “Raica qo!” Sa qai tauri tauri noqu Na qai vakadaberi koya ena buka. Gauna sa biuta kina sa qai kaya “Qori, raica na luvedaru sa biu ena buka.” Na gone e dabe ga ka dredre. Na nona dabe ga a dredre na gone, sa qai kaci na qase ni Rewa vua na noqu Bu “Miriamama, Miriamama, lako mai, qo na tevoru sega ni tamata. Taura na gone kauta datou sa gole I Vutia. Raica na gone sa kama, qo sa na mate.” Taura ga mai na buka na gone, tavirakina sega saraga ni dua na vanua lailai me kama. Na gone e dredre ga ka qasi sara vei nona Na.

I only remember my mother [Salanieta Davutu] performing the *Vila*[*vilarevo*]. She is Samu's [Vakuruivalu] father's elder sister. My grandmother is from Vutia in Rewa. A cousin of hers often used to travel here to visit her. Before, we used to have a huge Fijian *bure* with a fireplace which in a Fijian house is placed in the back on an elevated part. Almost every day the fireplace was always lit. My mother at that time was still a baby, crawling. My grandfather and her cousin used to sit by the fire competing in the art of storytelling; it was like Beqa challenging Rewa. Then the man from Rewa [grandmother's cousin] started his story: “One day, I went down to Vutia; on its far side is Laucala and on the other side is the Island of Nukulau. A huge crab lives in the area; it is so huge that when you lift it, you cannot see the Island of Beqa.” My grandfather replied, “Oh, it must be a really huge crab! Now you'll see what I'm going to do. I would like to tell you something.” Then he pushed all the firewood in the fireplace aside, with the ashes pushed together intact to make the fire hot and fiery. He then removed my mother's clothes, then called on his wife's cousin [the man from Vutia], “Look at this!” He then took my mother and placed her over the fiery fire. After placing her on the burning ashes, he told him: “Look at my child placed on the fire!” The child just sat there, smiling. The man from Rewa astonishingly called my grandmother, “Miriamama, Miriamama! Please come... This is not human; it's a demonic thing! Get the child out! Let's go back to Vutia! Look at that child! She'll be burned to death!” My grandfather then just took the child from the fire, swept the burning ashes off her back and there wasn't even a single burn on her back. Then the baby crawled, smiling, to her mother.

I asked her how she felt about firewalking in front of all those people and if she had been scared. She replied:

Gauna sa tukuna kina vei au o noqu Momo meu vila, vaka meu domobulatakina ni se qai vakadua. Ia na gauna au sa vakaisulu kina sa keimami lako ena vanua keimami laki dabe kina me keimami wawa toka kina sega ni dua na rere e lako mai vei au. Sa vaka e curumi au na kena yalo. Sega saraga meu bau rere vakalailai. Gauna ga au sa kacivi kina au sa lako saraga. Au vila, sega vakadua ni vakila e dua na katakata se meu bau kama. Na gauna au se qai tekivu ga kina meu curu e vaka au domobulatakina kau rere. Sa qai kaya vei au o noqu Momo, “Ko iko sega ni dodonu mo rere.” Gauna keitou lai vuni kina na rere kei na ka taucoko sa yali. Au vila vakarua au sega ni kila tale e dua na ka.

When I was told by my uncle to perform the *Vila[vilairevo]*, I was scared since it was my first time. However, when I put on the costume, waiting with other members of the my village to perform the *Vila[vilairevo]*, it seemed like that scary feeling had gone. I was overcome with the spirit of firewalking. I was no longer afraid. When it was my turn, I stood without hesitation. When I performed the *Vila[vilairevo]*, I never felt the burning stones, nor did I get burnt. However, when I was first called, I was initially overwhelmed by fear. Then my uncle reassured me, “Don’t be afraid.” When the moment arrived for all of us to go and hide and prepare, it seems that all the fears which had previously possessed me had gone. I performed the *Vila[vilairevo]* twice and I did not feel anything.

I asked her if Dakuibeqa’s women ever performed again. She replied:

Io sa sega, na gauna ga sa cegu kina na vilavilairevo mai Togalevu sa mani mai cava talega kina na neitou vila na vica na marama. Na gauna sa mai dewa kina i na vai otela ra tu qo me vaka na Fijian Resort, sa ra lako tiko ga na turaga ka keimami sa cegu o keimami na marama.

No, they no longer firewalk. Women performing the *Vila[vilairevo]* ended after their performance of the *Vila[vilairevo]*, when there was no more *Vila[vilairevo]* at Togalevu. From then on, *Vila[vilairevo]* performances were showcased at the hotels along the coral coast like the Fijian Resort. It was our men who performed mostly, with no women performing. (Naïoro pers. comm.)⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁶ Interview Dec. 22 2004 h.9:15, Dakuibeqa, Beqa

Dakuibeqa, unlike Rukua, is the home of the custodians of the *vilavilairevo*, who do not have to receive any permission to perform the ceremony. Dakuibeqa villagers are Methodists (a non-Pentecostal denomination). However, as discussed in the previous chapter, they have drawn on cultural resources and an economic rationale to resist the Methodist church's attempts to change or eradicate the values and beliefs associated with *vilavilairevo*.

Yanuca

On August 1, 1975, Salanieta Davutu, namesake of Miriama Naioro's mother and direct descendant of *bete levu* Sevanaia Waqasaqa (1866-1938), delivered her second son, Wame, on the neighbor islet of Yanuca, a few miles off Beqa. She had just started her teaching position at the local primary school. One of her younger brothers, Jiutasa Tikina, and her sister Miriama Naioro (namesake) had recently moved there, and also two other younger brothers, Lote Raikabula and Sevanaia Waqasaqa (namesake). That day, she remembers that Adi Lisitewa, a powerful, attractive woman from Lau sometimes described as a 'witch-doctor', landed in Yanuca where rumors say she had two or three lovers. Adi Lisitewa argued that Salanieta, Jiutasa, Lote and Sevanaia should be all performing firewalking, since they all belonged to the Naivilaqata clan of Beqa (Davutu pers. comm.)⁴⁴⁷

Although Salanieta Davutu was a woman, Adi Lisitewa promised that as a descendent of the priestly clan Naivilaqata, she could lead the village of Yanuca into firewalking and build new houses like Rukua and Dakuibeqa. Frightened by this

⁴⁴⁷ Interview May 23 2005 h. 17:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

powerful woman, twenty-eight year old Salanieta agreed to perform one firewalking ceremony in Yanuca to demonstrate the indelible gift attached to her lineage. At that time, she told me, she had no suspicion of the consequences. Salanieta's sister Miriama fell mysteriously and severely ill. Soon thereafter, Aporosa Daunivucu, an old man close to Adi Lisitewa, visited Miriama. He brought food and kava and presented her with a *tabua* [translate]. He then asked her to give Adi Lisitewa the power of *vilavilavirevo* and in exchange her life would be spared (Davutu pers. comm.)⁴⁴⁸ Miriama agreed, but after Adi Lisitewa received the gift, she reportedly took on the role of a high priest (*bete levu*) of firewalking, although she never firewalked herself. Adi Lisitewa declared that Yanuca people could now perform firewalking and that she had the power to guide them in the ceremony.

Adi Lisitewa invented a unique way to spectacularize the old ceremony. She replaced the traditional Naivilaqata's yellow and black *kiekie* (skirt-costume) made of *voivoi* (*Pandanus caricosus*) with a yellow and white *liku* (woman's skirt) made of banana leaves. She had the costumes soaked in water before the ceremony, then during the firewalk instructed the firewalkers to sit directly on the hot stones. The wet skirts raised a dense cloud of steam that added to the mystique of the performance.

Miriama rapidly regained her health, but Adi Lisitewa was ousted a few months later by the frightened and upset Yanuca community. She moved to Korovisilou village on Fiji's Coral Coast and obtained a contract to firewalk for the Naviti Hotel (Davutu *ibid*; Ratulolo *ibid*.; Tikina pers. *ibid*.). Her power swiftly vanished, however. The people

⁴⁴⁸ Interview May 23 2005 h. 17:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa. This story was confirmed by Miriama's son Waisake Ratulolo (interview Jan. 14 2005 h.15:00 Dakuni, Beqa), her brother Jiutasa Tikina (interview Jan. 7 2005 h. 17:00, Lapanoni (Deuba)), and Vakuruivalu (interview Jan. 21 2005 h. 17:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa).

she recruited in Korovisilou to firewalk were burned so badly that the Tui Sawau himself, Ratu Mitieli from Dakuibeqa, commanded her to cease her activities before his people ended up paying the moral and economic consequences of the bad publicity coming from her performances (Vakuruivalu *ibid.*). Adi Lisitewa eventually moved to Ra, where she tried unsuccessfully to set up firewalking performances for tourists.⁴⁴⁹

In Yanuca, two young men, Emani Sokosoko and Masi Voivoi, asked Miriama and Salanieta to share their gift of *vilavilairevo* with the village of Yanuca to create an income to build new houses and develop other village projects. Miriama and Salanieta agreed and Jiu Tikina, with his brothers Lote and Sevanaia, were made responsible for orchestrating the introduction of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony on Yanuca. They first replaced the banana leaf skirts with the original pandanus costume.

Meanwhile, Manoa Rasigatale, fresh from his studies in Australia, had opened Fiji's first theme park, the Pacific Harbour Cultural Centre (PHCC), less than a mile east of Deuba.⁴⁵⁰ It was modeled after the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawai'i, which selectively exhibits those tangible and believable aspects of Polynesian culture with which tourists are expected to identify (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Lippard, 1992; Ross, 1994; Stanley, 1998). According to its website, the PHCC was intended to be "a platform from which international visitors can gain an accurate understanding of pre-European Fijian Civilization."⁴⁵¹ It included a replica of 70 foot high *bure kalou* (traditional temple), the tallest in ancient Fiji, and a large *vale levu* (chief's house) complete with a concubine enclosure (*ba ni vada*). Actors portrayed a priest and a chief

⁴⁴⁹ She passed away in 2002 (Davutu *ibid.*).

⁴⁵⁰ It was first envisioned in the late 1970s by Canadian developer David Gilmour

⁴⁵¹ www.pacific-harbour.com/cultural/page1.html accessed Feb. 27 2002.

in residence.⁴⁵²

Manoa Rasigatale, a published author and connoisseur of Fiji's ancient traditions, believed that a *yaqona* ceremony and tour of the *bure kalou* would not draw many tourists from Suva or the Coral Coast. He decided to reshape and choreograph the *vilavilairevo* ceremony into the Centre's signature experience. As Stanley observed, at the PHCC, "the exoticism of culture is demonstrated by a performance of firewalking, which brings the excitement of circus performance with the authority of tradition" (1998: 38). The custodians of the *vilavilairevo* in Dakuibeqa did not appreciate his vision for the firewalk, so Rasigatale turned to the firewalkers in Yanuca to work at the Centre.⁴⁵³ Jiutasa, Lote and Sevanaia agreed to lead a firewalking troupe and pass their knowledge and power to firewalk to non-Sawau residents from Yanuca. The new team was directed by Rasigatale, who choreographed every detail from hairstyle to gait. A dark corset of *masi* (barkcloth) was introduced to make the straw-colored costume more striking. A *civa* (*Pinctada margaritifera* pectoral shell) and fish amulets were also added. Rasigatale also added a new figure to the ceremony, the *liganiwai* (priest's assistant), to oversee the blessing ceremony, which included an invocation to the God of the White Cloud, and clearing of the *lovo* before carrying in the *waqa balabala* (tree fern). To show how hot the stones were, Rasigatale's script had the *bete* drop an egg on them to fry and invite a young audience member to burn paper on them. As the *lali* (drums) beat a hypnotic tempo, the performance reached its crescendo as a group of oiled and fearless Fijian

⁴⁵² All the actors that work at the Centre memorize scripts (Rasigatale interview Feb. 18 2005 h. 11:00, Arts Village, Pacific Harbour).

⁴⁵³ The website explains to tourists why the firewalkers at the PHCC are not from Beqa: "The firewalking skill is possessed only by the Sawau tribesmen living in the four villages on the windward southern side of the island of Beqa. In special cases, however, members of the other tribes who have been adopted by the Sawau tribe have successfully performed the ceremony" (www.pacific-harbour.com/cultural/page1.html accessed Feb. 27 2002).

males walked through the *lovo*. An emcee explained each step in the redesigned performance to the audience. An indigenous brand product was born.

Until the PHCC was sold in 2004 to an Australian businessman, Manoa Rasigatale was the most successful impresario of the firewalking shows in Fiji and abroad. Recognizing that tourists want a ‘package’, Rasigatale coordinated the firewalking show with a dance (*meke*) and warrior theatre group. Armed with *i wau* (war clubs), the warriors ran around the arena’s bleachers frightening tourists with Māori-style grimaces.

Rasigatale also took Yanuca’s firewalkers to the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawai‘i in 1993 and in 1997.⁴⁵⁴ On both occasions, Rasigatale told the press that the “firewalkers today come from the island of Beqa... They are all of the Sawau clan who received the gift of fire walking from an elf spirit.” (Krauss 1993: 1, 8).⁴⁵⁵ He thus introduced Beqa and Sawau as marks of authenticity. They quickly became absorbed as brand-names into the public domain.

On returning home from the 1997 tour to Hawai‘i, some of the troupe were confronted by discontented Yanuca members who had not been selected for the trip overseas. As a consequence, Jiutasa and his wife and two children relocated to Lapanoni, near Deuba village, where Rasigatale gave them a place to live. Jiutasa, guided by Rasigatale, established a new firewalking team from Lapanoni and ran the firewalking shows at the Pacific Harbour Cultural Centre for six years. When I interviewed Jiutasa in

⁴⁵⁴ I saw the firewalking for the first time there during the 1993 tour. The 1997 show is remembered because the *waqa balabala* (tree fern, *Cyathea lunulata*) was misplaced by the airline and they had to use a local *hāpu‘u* tree fern (*Cibotium splendens*) stalk and for the *qalu* offering they used some bread and sugar instead of baked *Cordyline*.

⁴⁵⁵ In reality, only Jiutasa Tikina and his brother Lote Raikabula were originally from Beqa and the Sawau clan. Having lived in Yanuca for over twenty years, however, they were under the authority of the local chief, Tui Daga, not Tui Sawau.

January 2005, he was an ungratified and socially estranged man full of rancor and distress. During the sixty minutes of probably the most painful interview of my entire fieldwork experience, he recalled those years of firewalking at PHCC as a ‘circus’. He said he had only agreed to participate to assure his family an income in Lepanoni.⁴⁵⁶ Jiutasa’s bitter conclusion was that the spectacularization of his family’s ceremony, including sitting on the stones or displaying their high temperature by frying eggs or any other entertaining way, was not a good thing after all (Tikina *ibid.*).

An Australian businessman named Eric Roberts bought the PHCC in 2004 and renamed it the Arts Village. He invested in a six month makeover coordinated by Rasigatale.⁴⁵⁷ Manoa Rasigatale admitted that his obsession with perfection forced him to develop something new for the opening of the Arts Village. Rasigatale’s sister’s son, Semi Tavailagi, handsome and well educated, had been part of the team of Yanuca firewalkers for years. He was chosen to supervise and authenticate the firewalking shows by virtue of his ‘thin’ blood relationship to the Naivilaqata clan acquired through marriage and reinforced by the birth of his first child.⁴⁵⁸ Semi Tavailagi and a dozen of his kindred from various villages around Wainiyabia formed the group that currently holds daily firewalking shows at the Arts Village. This is the first *vilavilairevo* group to have no direct connection with Beqa and remain unauthorized by Dakuibeqa elders and the Tui Sawau. The Arts Village’s firewalking shows therefore infringe on Navilaqata

⁴⁵⁶ Lepanoni as a muddy, mosquito-infested settlement formed around a community of Solomon Islanders and former peacekeeping soldiers to Lebanon.

⁴⁵⁷ Rasigatale completed it in February 2005, then moved on to a new project on Malolo Island (Yasawa).

⁴⁵⁸ Jiutasa’s *carnet* was left performing occasionally at another facility in Pacific Harbor run by an American named Mr. Mitchell or upriver in Raiwaga for Lionel Danford, a small tour operator based in Navua. Danford specialized in boating tourists to the site where a cheesy monster movie titled *Anacondas: The Hunt for the Blood Orchid* (Columbia Pictures 2004) had been filmed.

customs, expropriating the intellectual property of their sacred ritual, including its constitutive elements and oral narratives, for commercial profit (Greaves 1994).

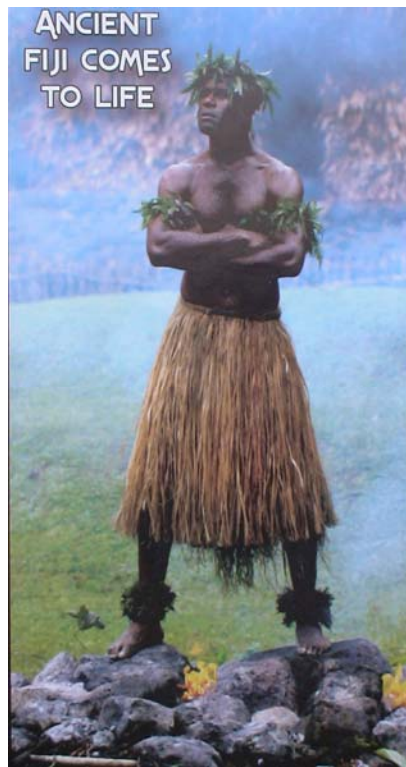


Figure 5.2 Source: Arts Village website.⁴⁵⁹

The Arts Village website and brochures emphasize the spectacle and danger of firewalking:

If you are looking for the Fijian Hot Spot, it doesn't get toastier than bare feet, scorching rocks, and one of Fiji 's greatest traditions- the Beqa Firewalkers. You can see it at the Arts Village Firewalking Show. Be prepared to be astonished. Be prepared to laugh, but most importantly be prepared to have a spectacular experience. This Show is a mixture of firewalking, fashion parades, singing, dancing, acrobatics, stunts, storytelling, fighting and is purely for your entertainment... From the first appearance of the powerful muscular men in their brightly coloured costumes set against an impressive backdrop of a five story temple and lush green gardens, you know you're in for a visual feast... The fire is smoking, the stones are sizzling hot and the atmosphere is moody. You

⁴⁵⁹ URL: www.artsvillage.com.

start to get the feeling that what you're about to witness is not for the faint hearted. Now the firewalkers emerge from the island, chanting. It is suddenly clear that firewalking is a male only practice. One by one they do the impossible and pass over the stones with grace and pride. Would you walk barefoot through an 850 degree Celsius fire? This is not something to be tried at home.⁴⁶⁰

As Kasfir observes of Maasai and Samburu warriors performing for tourist dollars, “bodily practice can be made accessible through its weaponry or ornaments, both of which may be purchased as souvenirs” (2004: 341). Although no souvenir related to the *vilavilairevo* is available at the two souvenir shops inside the Arts Village, replicas of *i wau* and cannibal forks (*i culanibokola*) are sold, reiterating western fantasies of cannibalism and danger.

The following chapters discuss issues of misappropriation and vulgarization of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony. For the moment, however, note that such expropriation of firewalking was not isolated one. In the course of my research, I encountered other more spurious versions, including the ‘firedancers’ of Robinson Crusoe Island and Kalevu South Pacific Cultural Centre (Figs. 5.3, 5.4). In both instances, members of the staff would stand on the heated stones of a modest earth oven after the food that had been cooked in the oven had been served to tourists.

⁴⁶⁰ URL: <http://www.artsfactory.com/> Accessed Jan. 2 2007.

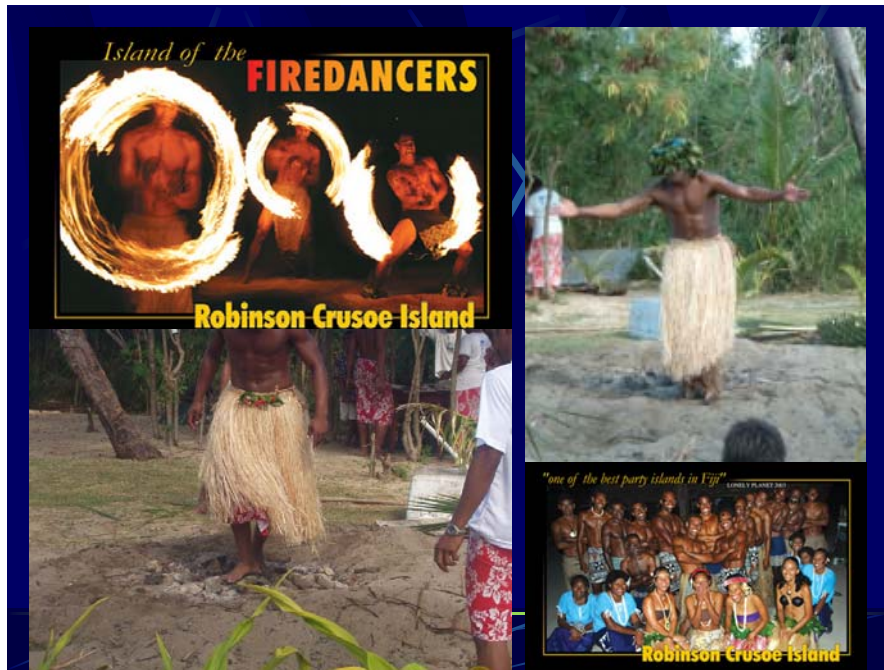


Figure 5.3 Robinson Crusoe Island's firewalking demonstration.

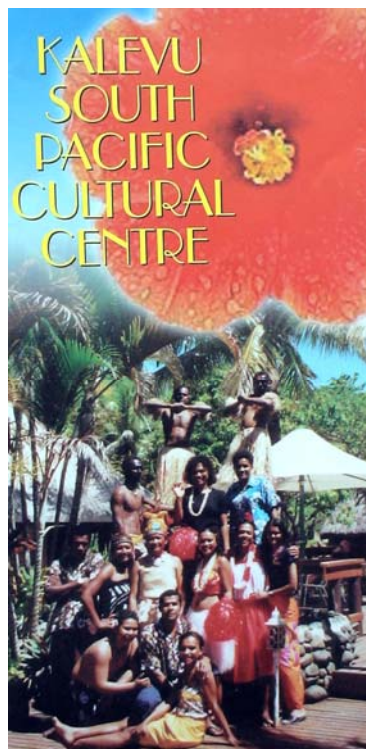


Figure 5.4 Kalevu South Pacific Cultural Centre brochure.

These are offensive misrepresentations of the *vilavilavevo* ceremony. Another recent

notable distortion of the *vilavilavevo* ceremony is found in Maui filmmaker Tom Vendetti's thirty-minute film, *Fiji Firewalkers* (2003).



Figure 5.5 *Fiji Firewalkers* (2003).

The film cheerfully mixes *meke* fishing and folklore of Fijian village life with a voice-over by new age musician Paul Horn. It builds to a crescendo suspense with the firewalking ceremony. Before leaving to conduct fieldwork in Beqa, I obtained a copy of the DVD from Vendetti. Through email correspondence, I asked him where Vadrai, the village where the performance had been filmed, was located, for I had never heard of it. Vendetti replied:

The Vadrai village is located close to the Marlin Bay Hotel on Bequ Island [sic]. The ceremony was filmed close to the beach near the village. The village scenes during the firewalking segment are scenes from the Beqa Village [sic]. All Firewalkers are from Beqa and that village. (Vendetti pers. comm.)⁴⁶¹

⁴⁶¹ Email Dec. 17 2003. The Marlin Bay Hotel was renamed the Beqa Lagoon Resort in 2004.

Manoa ‘Raisigadale’ [sic] appears in the film’s credits as writer, cultural consultant and narrator (although the voice is Paul Horn’s). The Dakuibeqa village firewalkers are listed as ‘Talent’, although they do *not* appear in the film. Appropriating their village name serves here to authenticate the performance.

When I started asking questions about the film in Dakuibeqa, I realized it had had a negative impact on the Sawau community. Dakuibeqa firewalkers had refused to participate in the filming because the script included a surreal cannibalistic ending in which the director, Vendetti himself, was to be ‘eaten’. A group of Rukuans accepted his profitable offer, however. Mika Tubanavau, my field consultant from Rukua, explained to me that Vendetti asked for his logistical help in Rukua. The Rukuan performers were required to wear Tahitian-style firewalking *liku* (skirts) of *Cordyline* leaves, which according to Vendetti were more authentic than the pandanus skirts worn in Fiji (Tubanavau pers. comm.).⁴⁶² Vendetti filmed the *meke* scene in Vadrai, which is not a village but part of Rukua’s school compound. The firewalking sequence was filmed in Naduruvesi, outside of Rukua, since the villagers who were not performing in the film did not want to get further involved (for reasons expounded in Chapter 4) (Tubanavau pers. comm.).⁴⁶³ The Rukuan firewalkers paid some severe consequences for participating. A couple of hours after the staged performance, they realized that they had burned their feet. Marika explained to me that this happened because the Rukuans failed to obtain permission from the elders in Dakuibeqa to ; a week later, the firewalkers from

⁴⁶² Interview Jan. 6 2005 h.12:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

⁴⁶³ Interview Jan. 6 2005 h.12:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

Dakuibeqa generously healed their burned feet (Tivitivi pers. comm.)⁴⁶⁴

In all the examples discussed above, including the ‘spurious’ or ‘culturally offensive’ ones, the process of authenticating the tourist firewalking experience involves certification as coming from ‘Beqa’, which in Fiji is synonymous with ‘firewalkers’.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues that heritage and tourism are collaborative industries, since tourism converts heritage locations into economically viable tourist destinations:

Heritage is a new mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse in the past... Heritage is created through a process of exhibition (as knowledge, as performance, as museum display)... Heritage adds value to existing assets that have either ceased to be viable (subsistence lifestyles, obsolete technologies, abandoned mines, the evidence of past disasters) or that never were economically productive because an area was too hot, too cold, too wet, or too remote. (1995: 369-70; see also 1998: 149-50)

While I agree that heritage has a recourse in the past, I disagree with these dystopian arguments. Culture is not necessarily embedded in a locale and heritage is not always “a transvaluation of the obsolete, the mistaken, the dead, and the defunct” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett *ibid.*).

By “new mode of cultural production,” Kirshenblatt-Gimblett does not mean that the result is inauthentic or invented, only that it has “recourse in the past” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett *ibid.*). The following section discusses how Beqa’s cultural heritage has not been lost and reclaimed; nor is it emergent. Rather, it is negotiated through a process of exhibition, spectacle and entertainment for the purpose of tourism.

⁴⁶⁴ Interview Nov. 20 2004 h.17:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

‘Made in Beqa’

i. (Trade)Marking the Body, Marketing the Primitive

The construction of realism and authenticity is a complex representational process reflecting past international folklore exhibitions, human showcases and exotic antiquities. Between the end of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century, exotic postcards marked genuineness. They circulated idealized images of natives while promoting tourism (Desmond 1999: 43). Generally only available at remote tourist locations, they became specimens and trophies guaranteeing reality (Stewart 1984). To be alluring, they had to mix exotic scenery with exotic natives, preferably depicted as primitives living in the past (Desmond 1999). In Fiji, rare postcards showing the *vilavilavevo* ceremony represented the exotic to tourists who wanted to see real natives in their native environment doing real native things (Figs. 5.6, 5.7, 5.8) (Desmond: 1999: 120).



Figure 5.6 Firewalking at Korowa on Beqa.
Courtesy Rod Ewins' private collection.⁴⁶⁵

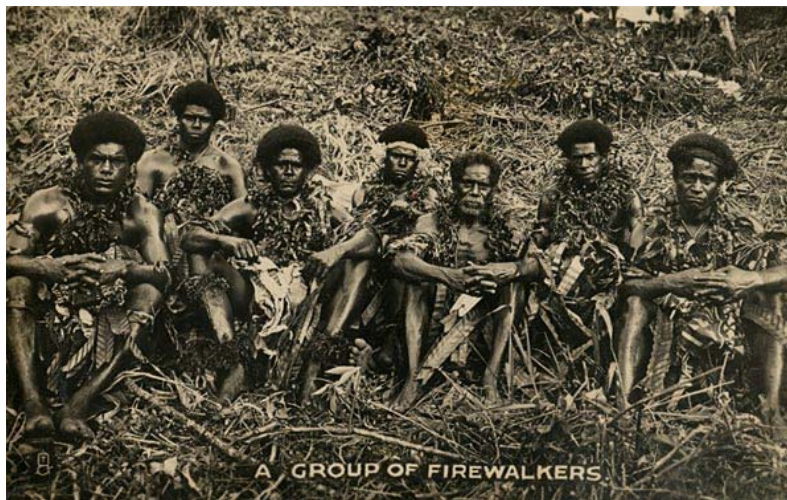


Figure 5.7 A group of firewalkers, probably at Korowa, Beqa.
Courtesy Rod Ewins' private collection.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁵ Tuck's Post Card. Publisher Raphael Tuck and Sons Ltd. Undated, but probably published around 1920. Available at: <http://www.justpacific.com/fiji/fijiphotos/cards/fijians/ceremonies.html>. This image also appears as an illustration in *The Colony of Fiji: 1874-1924* (Davidson 1925).

⁴⁶⁶ Tuck's Post Card. Publisher Raphael Tuck and Sons Ltd. No date, but probably around 1920. This was possibly photographed at the same time and place as the previous one. The reverse side



Figure 5.8 Firewalking in Beqa. Courtesy Rod Ewins' private collection.⁴⁶⁷

Cannibals, headhunters, indigenous warriors and 'profane' rituals have been dominant themes in ethnic tourism for a long time.⁴⁶⁸ The 'cannibal warrior' theme in Fiji has been a savage cliché since well before Rasigatale's 'war theatre' mixed firewalking with warriors at PHCC. A 1995 PHCC brochure, titled "Welcome to Another World: A Fascinating Look at Fiji's Past and Present," reads:

Step into a twin-hulled canoe poled by warriors for your island tour. It is your time-machine, taking you back 3,000 years to observe culture which came from the sea, blended with the beauty and grandeur of these islands, where people learned to live with richness and dignity. A Fijian warrior in traditional dress will go on your voyage into the past. (quoted in Stanley 1998: 38).

includes the caption: "The family of firewalkers prepared for the ceremony - only one family on one island possesses the mysterious secret of walking bare-footed on red hot stones." This image also appeared in *The Colony of Fiji: 1874-1924* (Davidson 1925). Available at: <http://www.justpacific.com/fiji/fijiphotos/cards/fijians/ceremonies.html>.

⁴⁶⁷ Publisher and date unknown. Bears caption "16. Firewalking, Fiji." Possibly taken in the 1920s, location unknown. Available at:

<http://www.justpacific.com/fiji/fijiphotos/cards/fijians/ceremonies.html>.

⁴⁶⁸ They are often juxtaposed with a softer primitivism of sexuality, feminine lushness and exotic tropical fragrances.

In tourist reality, Fijian firewalkers have been misrepresented as cannibals (Stymeist 1996), sorcerers (McDermott 1978) and warriors holding *kiakavo* spur-clubs (Fig. 5.9).



Figure 5.9 “The Fijian Firewalkers Dressed for the Rite.” Commemorative photograph from the New Zealand International Exhibition held in Hagley Park, Christchurch in 1905. Courtesy of Josefa Cegucegu.

This faded picture is similar to another showcasing an unidentified group of ‘real’ Fijian warriors in fighting dress and holding *kiakavo* (Fig. 5.10).



Figure 5.10 Unidentified group of Fijians warriors. Na/nd. Courtesy of the Institute of Fijian Language and Culture, Suva.

The time of cannibal tours, exotic fairs and international exhibits of the primitive has not ended but merely been reformulated for the modern capitalist economy.

Lindebaum and others argue that primitivism, especially the icon of the cannibal, retains much of its ideological force (Lindebaum 2004: 491; MacCannell 1992: 19; Schutte 2003: 473). Modern morbid curiosities are enacted at international tourist expos such as the ITB (International Tourism Bourse) in Berlin, BIT (International Tourism Exchange) in Milano, and WTM (World Travel Market) in London. Each event is visited by more than 150,000 people over a weekend. These temporary stages and pavilions of 'The World' are responses to the modern demand for primitive curiosities.

The 'demand' comes from international tour operators and well-informed postmodern tourists interested in broadening their cultural and geographical understanding of various destinations and services. The 'supply' comes from national and regional promotional boards, trade associations and consortia, hotel chains, tour operators, travel agencies and airline companies.

As Lindenbaum notes, "we now live in a postmodern world in which those we once called exotic live among us" (2004: 490). To authenticate the experience for their visitors, participating nations often showcase their 'otherness' in these expositions (Figs. 5.11, 5.12, 5.13). For example, the Singapore Tourism Board describes its pavilion at the 2006 ITB as follows:

In a vibrant show of colours, contemporary music and dance, fused with a haute couture collection from Singapore's foremost designers, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) today unveiled a preview of the Uniquely Singapore Style Showcase to give all visitors a flavour of what can be expected at the Singapore pavilion at Hall 26a, stand 123 at ITB Berlin in Germany from 10 to 12 March 2006.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁹ Singapore Tourism Board press-release March 10, 2006



Figure 5.11 “Style Showcase” at ITB 2006 Berlin.
Source: The Singapore Tourism Board.



Figure 5.12 A stuffed white bear greets the visitors of the Denmark stand at ITB 2006, Berlin. Photo source: visitdenmark.com.

In the early 1990s, the Tourism Council of the South Pacific (TCSP) in

collaboration with the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) flew exotic human specimens from the western Pacific to compete with the captivating *tamure* dancers provided by the Office du Tourisme de Tahiti et ses îles⁴⁷⁰ The TCSP's highlight was a semi-nude member of the Huli tribe from the Papua New Guinea highlands; the Huli exhibit has been retained at international expos in the twenty-first century (Fig. 5.13).



Figure 5.13 A member of the Huli tribe from Papua New Guinea. From the South Pacific Night at the ITB 2006 Berlin. Photo source: polycult.org.

The Fiji Visitors Bureau's (FVB) marketing strategy is to present Fiji as a relaxing, convenient escape, similar to the fantasy of an untouched Paradise island that was in vogue in the 1970s, replete with assorted forms of ethnic Fijian culture. This

⁴⁷⁰ From 1990 to 1994, I was a consultant to the European office of the TCSP, recently renamed the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO). It is the inter-governmental body for the tourism sector in the South Pacific. Its headquarters is in Suva, Fiji.

“fictitious paradise” is “manufactured to relieve the tensions and frustrations of modern urban life” (Rajotte 1978: 15); the “life and behaviour are to be fashioned to fulfill the dream expectations of the traveling public” (Crocombe 1973: 94); it is “a place mould so that it would correspond to the image disseminated among the mass traveling public and promoted by the travel industry” (Cohen 1982: 9). I met with Josefa Tuamoto, Head of Marketing of the FVB a couple of weeks after the 10th Bula Fiji Tourism Exchange, which attracted a record number of 600 participants in June 2005. I asked him about FVB’s marketing strategy:

I think that [from] Fiji’s perspective, with the globalization and the world that is getting flat, you know, culture is the only thing that differentiates a destination, ah, like for Fiji. Fiji, when we go to Milano [BIT], I’ve been there a couple of times, and the wholesalers, they love to see Fijians. And our reps based in Italy, they love seeing us when we walk in the door... When you look at the cultural aspects, because it’s so unique that you cannot duplicate that, so in terms of the competitive edge there is only one Fiji... Like, for instance, in the U.S. right now, we have been launching a new campaign for two years, focusing on the word *Bula* and the attributes attached to the word *Bula* and again you cannot duplicate it. *Bula* is not just a greeting; it’s optimism, it’s life, you know, and the creative aspects that we build around it... I’ll probably forward to you some of those campaign [messages] that we have done. Essentially, what I am saying is that it comes down to the fact that our culture plays a critical role in the whole marketing strategy for Fiji.

I asked him what FVB thinks is the best way for Fijian culture to be accessed by the tourists.

Essentially this. This is a key I’ll tell you. They [tourists] don’t want to be a spectator in our culture. They want to be participating in our culture, so the setting of the resorts in Fiji should be that they are there, inside the culture... We have only the Arts Village. My personal view is that the Arts Village should have been taken over by government, to have a center where there is no such thing as commercialization, you know. Because the bottom line for everybody, there should be a center, a reservation of culture, allowing people to do research, and show it like that... Yeah, particularly if you are talking to Americans. That is exactly what we say to them, “Go to Pacific Harbour [Arts Village], because it’s a small version

of the Polynesian Cultural Centre,” because they already know.

I then asked Tuamoto if the Fijian firewalkers that had been employed in past campaigns were still involved in FVB’s international marketing strategy.

I remember the poster ‘Hot Days, Hot Nights’ [Fig. 5.14]....We’ve used the firewalkers in Sydney at Darling Harbour. Would you believe that we had firewalking there? That was years back, before I came into the picture, before I came into the Fiji Visitors Bureau. I know there is documentation there. I think we have done it also in New Zealand. And I don’t know whether they have been to the U.S. I know they went to Japan....I think in the past that probably might have been the right campaign. Now, with the information available in the Internet, they [the tourists] know what they want. They come in and they say, “Okay, I want to go on a tour that also includes firewalking. I want to go in that and I want to see firewalking.”... The information on the Internet is critical. It is absolutely critical. Sometimes our travel agents are surprised at the knowledge of the consumer. So, you know, so I guess for us as destination managers, we really have to be up there, knowing everything at the bottom... Yeah, most of them [the tourists] know what they want, but the problem is, well essentially in Fiji, the unique icon in Fiji, is, okay, firewalking and *Fiji Water*. Those are the passions that are coming in now. And the challenge for us, though, at the Bureau, is to make sure we deliver what they [the tourists] want.

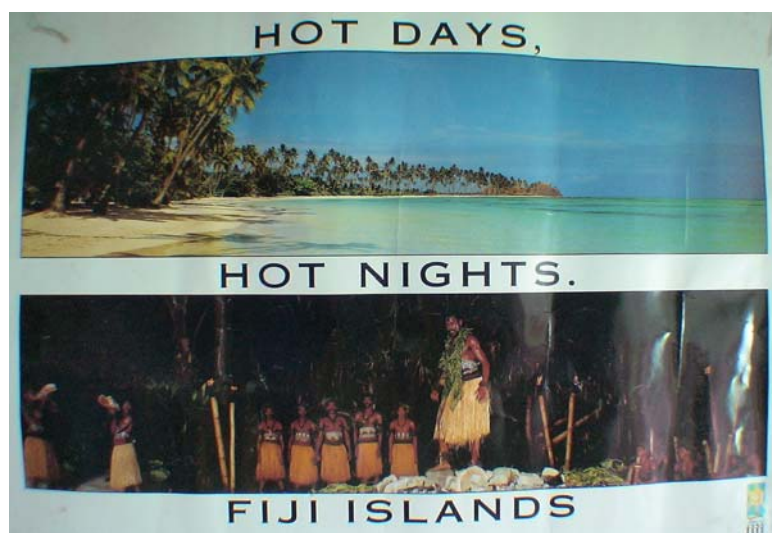


Figure 5.14 Lote Raikabula (Yanuca group) posing for the FVB campaign poster. Courtesy of FVB.

I concluded by asking Tuamoto what FVB is planning for future international

tourism fairs:

We use tapes. It's a very outdated one. I mean, the last tape that we did was *The Spirit of Fiji*. Yeah, that was the last, the last thing that we've ever done on culture. And then we had 'living culture', [however] we do not have Tahiti's budget. It's about three times ours, so it's a big one... We're doing research on what is called a 'brand health check', because the last research we've done was in '98. So much has happened, we want to recheck whether our brand is still relevant or not. We might have to go back in, taking pictures, to try out some cultural shots, you know, on the warriors....So many of us [FVB staff] are wanting to push culture, but much of them are saying, "No, we don't want culture," just about tropical relaxation. (Tuamoto pers. comm.)⁴⁷¹

Tuamoto's responses imply that Beqa's firewalking remains the signature cultural performance in Fiji as long as it is conveniently packaged to guests.

Vilavilavirevo has become a cultural icon on which the state profits, tourist media capitalize, and hotels hijack and deterritorialize. The commodified experiences and safe consumption provided in the enclavic spaces of the Arts Village and the hotels inevitably lead to a spectacularized link between the past and the present.⁴⁷²

Van Den Berghe (1995) argues that all tourism is a form of ethnic relations since it brings together people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. However, I noticed some terminological disorientation in both tourist and academic realms, where cultural tourism has been often associated with ethnic tourism or heritage tourism. A distinction between forms of tourism has been proposed by a number of authors. Wood (1984) suggests that while cultural tourism involves an indirect exposure to a culture, ethnic tourism involves

⁴⁷¹ Interview July 12 2005 h. 17:00, Suva.

⁴⁷² As travel writer David Stanley says, even a seasoned traveler such as himself finds it difficult to get an invitation to a 'real' Fijian village or attend a 'real' *yagona* ceremony among the 'original' firewalkers of Beqa: (D. Stanley 1999: 24). Stanley is known for his comprehensive *South Pacific Handbook*, first published in 1979, now in its ninth edition.

a more intimate, first-hand experience. Heritage tourism is similar to V. Smith's (1996: 287) "indigenous tourism" in that it incorporates a quest for past and present cultural landscapes, folklore, arts and crafts, ethnic foods, social customs and cultural celebrations (Chhabra et al. 2003: 703).

Linnekin seems to paraphrase Tuamotu when she observes that "Fiji became to Australians and New Zealanders what Hawai'i has been to mainland Americans, a relatively inexpensive getaway, not too far away, offering a foreign—but not *too* exotic—cultural backdrop together with a high standard of comfort and service" (Linnekin 1997: 229). As part of this exotic backdrop, she notes, the tourists can access "an occasional special event or performance such as hula or Fijian firewalking" (Linnekin 1997: 229).

In my experience, however, tourists do not seem especially interested in seeing authentic *yaqona* or *vilavilaverevo* ceremonies. My interviews with Australian and New Zealand guests at the hotels and Arts Village indicate that their motivation to attend a firewalking show at a hotel or in the Arts Village is low. These 'recreational' or 'incidental ethnic' tourists arrive in Fiji culturally unprepared for the firewalking ceremony and leave Fiji still ignorant about the spectacle once witnessed, since it defies western logic. The conflation of messages, often presented jokingly in a variety of firewalking 'legends' recited by the emcees contributes to the *circensis* exotic atmosphere already emphasized at the performance.

There are different ways in which the firewalking site produces this desired effect. The largest resorts and the Arts Village host firewalking shows in

‘firewalking arenas’ lit by *tiki* torches. Bleachers under a semicircular thatched roof are about ten feet away from the pit in the middle of the arena. A Fijian ‘warrior’ welcomes the public at the entrance to the arenas at the Warwick Hotel and at Fijian-Shangri-La Resorts. These resemble movie sets more than open air stages; the arenas are transformed into recognizable versions of the exotic landscapes seen in films and reality shows such as *Survivor* (N. Stanley 1998: 20).

Two Australian physiotherapists who had seen firewalking previously asked me to explain the “specific psycho-physical preparation” the firewalkers have to go through before the ceremony⁴⁷³ A restaurateur from Melbourne who attended the show with his wife and children, told me they had loved the show, particularly when his young boy along with two of or three other hotel guests’ children was dressed up, had their bodies painted, and participated in an exotic indigenous dance in front of the audience before the firewalkers came in⁴⁷⁴ Another family from Melbourne left even more impressed and puzzled when Samuela Vakuruivalu treated their young daughter’s sunburned shoulders⁴⁷⁵

An employee of the French Embassy employee in Suva, despite the fact that she has been living in Suva for years, expressed her skepticism about *la marche sur le feu* (firewalking), but had it confused with the walking on charcoal as practiced by Indo-Fijians⁴⁷⁶ An Australian physician in his fifties, who attended the show with his family, told me that it was pretty much what he remembered seeing two decades before, although he remembered seeing flames emerging from

⁴⁷³ Interview Dec. 12 2004 h.19:00, Fiji Club Beach Resort, Nadi.

⁴⁷⁴ Interview Dec. 15 2004 h.14:30, The Fijian-Shangri-La, Yanuca peninsula.

⁴⁷⁵ Interview Dec. 27 2004 h.15:00, The Fijian-Shangri-La, Yanuca peninsula.

⁴⁷⁶ Interview Feb. 4 2005 h.19:00, Suva, Alliance Française.

the pit and the firewalkers spending more time walking in it⁴⁷⁷ An elderly couple from Brisbane enjoyed talking about their exotic travels after the show. They told me that they had seen something similar in Bali years before, although the participants were walking in blazing fire and the whole event was “more a ritual” because the participants were all in a trance.⁴⁷⁸

At Beqa Lagoon Resort and other boutique resorts, shows are held once a week at sunset, a few yards from the beach.⁴⁷⁹ A message board at the bar read:

FIREWALKING STARTS WHEN THE ROCKS ARE HOT, AROUND
5PM. LISTEN TO THE DRUMS AND MEET BY THE FIRE
WALKING PIT. GRAB A DRINK, A SEAT AND ENJOY THIS VERY
SPECIAL SHOW.

Combining the wild and the civilized, the atmosphere is very colonial-chic with *tiki* torches blowing in the breeze and rattan chairs placed for the occasion around the *lovo*. The guests usually emerge from the bar’s veranda with their aperitifs and cameras few minutes before the firewalkers make their colorful entrance. There are no restrictions on the guests, who circulate during the show taking pictures, even touching the firewalkers’ feet.⁴⁸⁰ Right after the show, before dinner is served, guests mingle with the firewalkers, having their photographs taken together. This temporary intimacy allows guests to ask questions, usually about the firewalkers’ “paranormal power” and about absence of pain.

⁴⁷⁷ Interview Mar. 18 2005 h.19:00, The Fijian-Shangri-La, Yanuca peninsula.

⁴⁷⁸ Interview May 4 2005 h. 19:15, The Naviti Resort, Coral Coast.

⁴⁷⁹ After the resort added a swimming pool in spring 2005, the show was moved to the lawn behind the large veranda of the restaurant and bar.

⁴⁸⁰ In exclusive resorts such as the Beqa Lagoon Resort on Beqa and the Royal Davui on Ugaga, there is little space between the tourists and the performers. Proximity with the bodies of the firewalkers evokes that of contact with the Maasai on the lawn of Mayers Ranch described by Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1994). However, in firewalking, the nostalgia for the safari is replaced by a post-colonial morbid malaise, informed by blasé voyeurism and credulity.

There are many kinds of tourists, but those I observed at Beqa Lagoon and Royal Davui were professionals in the middle to high classes, mostly northern American and European. One evening, I overheard three large North American men with chilled *Fiji Bitter* in their hands joking about the firewalkers. One said, “It’s amazing,” but the tallest whispered back, “Nah, they walk too fast”.⁴⁸¹ Another time a guest crawled to the *lovo*, filming as the firewalkers stepped over him.

A similar *mise en scène* is offered at the Royal Davui, one of the top five luxury resorts in Fiji.⁴⁸² The only difference is that here the guests descend from the Banyan bar and lounge at their discretion; there are no announcements, stage managers, recitations of the legend, or an assigned seating area. This also allows a relaxed intimacy as they stand around the performance space sipping their drinks. The scenes at both these resorts probably contribute to what Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett call “tourism realism” (1994). This kind of realism can be distinguished from the vulgar simulation of authenticity offered at all the other hotels and the Arts Village. This calculated ‘realism’ has enough spectacle mixed with exotic danger to be credible but not too much to disturb the guests (Bruner & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994). It should be chic and even shake them up, but not shock them. Like in Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s example from East Africa, firewalking becomes experience theater built on improvisational,

⁴⁸¹ Dec. 28, 2004, h.15:00, Beqa Lagoon Resort, Beqa.

⁴⁸² The cost of staying in one of their fifteen exclusive *vales* (bungalows) starts at just above USD\$1,000 per night, reaching USD\$1,500 for their Davui Honeymoon Suite. This is “a sanctuary revealing a hidden paradise: an indoor garden that welcomes you and leads your gaze outward toward the blue Beqa Lagoon beyond.” Royal Davui website, <http://www.royaldavui.com/home.htm>, accessed Oct. 19 2006.

kinesthetic, tactual and intimate principles, where indigenous performances and indigenous bodies, detached from their cultural context, are marked, polished and unmediatedly offered to the guests.

ii. Embodying Postmodern Aesthetics

While a major concern of the tourism industry is to anticipate tourists' tastes, when traditional cultural expressions become commodified and showcased, a few questions arise: To what extent are a community's attitudes and performative ritual styles inseparable from its worldview? What is the nature of the aesthetic dialog between performer and audience in cross-cultural encounters? Does the art creator/performer apprehend his own aesthetic experience in the reflection provided by the audience's reactions?

The communicative process occurs indirectly between artists and consumers in the Fijian firewalking performances. The local cultural product is controlled, authenticated and renegotiated by 'gatekeepers', as they are called in tourism management studies (Bernstein & Awe 1999; McKercher & du Cros 2002; Middleton 1994). The firewalking impresarios described above are similar to what Jules-Rosette (1984: 16), Crick (1989: 332) and Van den Berghe (1998: 581) call "middlemen": cultural interpreters and transformers of popular conceptions who renegotiate the cultural product to their own advantage (see also Cohen 1982; Evans 1976; McKean 1976; Nuñez 1989; Van den Berghe 1980). The tourist market provides a hyper-real, Mickey Moused environment that encourages variation and change (Eco 1986). Dealers and brokers at village and

international levels influence the designs, format and genres of the artwork produced (Jules-Rosette 1984: 195).

I have already stressed the idea that aesthetics in contemporary anthropology is a problem of communication rather than taste. Art creators and performers respond to an aesthetic distance, a perceived gap between the cultural product and the expectations of the audience. Jules-Rosette's (1984: 229) work with African tourist art indicates that cultural products are dialogically constructed through mirroring and double reflections between the artists and the audiences. Silverman (1999) suggests that the native artist looks across the aesthetic boundary at the tourists' faces to interpret their reading of the art. Similarly, Bruner observes that Third World South Pacific cultural displays serve as a "mirror for western fantasies," reflecting back in performance what the tourist desires (Bruner 1991: 228).

Umberto Eco speaks of an "aesthetic idiolect" through which art combines elements of different codes for stylistic purposes and an "aesthetic code-changing" that results in variation in artistic styles as they accommodate the tastes of tourists, local audiences and special clientele (Eco 1979: 270-5). Artists and consumers are joint producers of tourist art as a communicative process. The communication is indirect. The pattern resembles that of mass-mediated communication, as the artist/performer may never come into direct contact with the consumer. The consumers, in turn, rely upon middlemen and retailers for their evaluation of what is sold (Jules-Rosette 1984: 194). Studies of the effects of tourism on host societies are replete with examples of cultural products that, through a dialogic feedback process along the market chain to its producers, are becoming increasingly adapted to the tastes of the guests (Appadurai 1986;

Barker, 1998; Boorstin 1964; Bruner 1991; Chaabra 2005; Cohen 1982, 1983, 1988; Crocombe 1978; de Burlo 1996; Fillitz 2002; Graburn 1976, 1984; Jules-Rosette 1984; Lindberg and Johnson 1997; Picard 1990; Rajotte 1978; Silver 1979; Silverman 1999; Van Den Berghe 1995).

In his early writings, the Neapolitan Benedetto Croce identified aesthetics with intuition, which he used in the Latin sense of achieving knowledge from direct perception or contemplation (1912, 1921, 1929).⁴⁸³ According to the Neapolitan thinker, in America misunderstood, sidestepped and relegated in the shadows of Vico, Gramsci and Gentile (see Roberts 1995; Caritt 1969; Jacobitti 1999), aesthetic intuition is a cognitive yet emotive expression of the human spirit, not an obscure vibration of the brain or a passive awareness. Arnold Berleant observes that there is a tacit understanding that, embedded in the breadth of artistic activity, aesthetic perception can infuse and inspire the great range of cultural life. Embodiment in aesthetics is a complex notion suggesting that meanings are experienced rather than cognized (Berleant 2004: 2, 86; Merleau-Ponty 1968: 248-9).

Culture is embodied in innumerable ways. Race, class, gender and geography are

⁴⁸³ “The Breviary of Aesthetics” 1912, in *The Book of the Opening of the Rice Institute* (trans. by Douglas Ainslie) Houston: The Rice Institute 2: 450-517. “The Breviary” appears in the form of four lessons (*quattro lezioni*) he was asked to write and deliver them at the inauguration of Rice University in 1912. Croce declined the invitation to attend the event; however, he wrote the lessons and submitted them for translation, so that they could be read in his absence. The same translation was subsequently revised and republished in England under the title *The Essence of Aesthetic*. London: William Heinemann, 1921. More recently it was republished under the title *Guide to Aesthetics* (trans. by Patrick Romanell). Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965. The Italian version was published under the title *Breviario di Estetica: Quattro Lezioni*. Bari: Laterza, 1913. In addition, “Aesthetics” 1929, in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th ed. 263-72 (trans. by R.G. Collingwood). The original Italian version was printed in *Ultimi Saggi* (1935) with the title “Aesthetica in Nuce”, published again, separately, in 1946 (Bari: Laterza) and later reprinted in English under the same title, in B. Croce *Philosophy, Poetry, History: An anthology of essays* (trans. and introduced by Cecil Sprigge) Oxford, 1966: 215-47, a translation of a collection originally published as *Filosofia, poesia, storia*, Milano, Riccardi, 1951. Croce was misunderstood in America and relegated to the shadows of Vico, Gramsci and Gentile (Caritt 1969; Jacobitti 1999; Roberts 1995).

lived through bodily forms and structures reflecting cultural, sexual, racial and social differences. Berleant argues that art is a skilful embodiment of real experience and that the notion of intuition captures mimesis as embodiment (Berleant 2004: 88, 93). Croce's formal intuition is "the sense of coherence, the consciousness of binding shape, the inevitability of succession and sequence, of progression and resolution" (Berleant 2004: 95).

Aesthetics, Arno observes, "is consistently linked with ritual communication by anthropologists (Leach 1954; Miyazaki 2000; Tambiah 1985), and not only poetry and ritual but also social analysis itself taps into the intuitive dimension of communication" (Arno 2003: 817). Berleant (1991, 2002) argues that aesthetics in anthropology consists in studying not the art of different cultures, but the perceptual experience that different cultures value and express artistically. Aesthetic experience pervades several regions of people's cultural lives, from practical activities devoted to food gathering and craftsmanship to ceremonial observance and other social occasions.

Berleant (2002) observes that cultural geographers and anthropologists have established that culture influences perception to a profound degree. Among the cattle-keeping Nilotes of Southern Sudan, for example, there are no art objects, yet Coote observes that in their appreciation of certain perceptual values we discover aesthetic values comparable to our own. Coote stresses that "perception is an active and cognitive process in which cultural factors play a dominant role. Perceptions are cultural phenomena" (Coote 1992: 247). Morphy (1992) argues that aesthetics in anthropology should not deal exclusively with form, but should be also concerned with content, with the way in which a particular idea is expressed and with the appropriateness of an image

to a particular event. Both form and content are associated with aesthetic effects. Some aesthetics effects associated with particular genres, for example catharsis in tragedy, are centrally concerned with content. Morphy observes that content is integral to the aesthetic of Yolngu ritual, since the content of a particular ritual component is the reason why it is chosen. The individual component has aesthetic qualities independent of context, but aesthetic effects also arise out of the way in which elements of the ritual are structured and joined together in a sequence in relation to the themes and objectives of the particular ceremony.

Leach, citing Wittgenstein (1974[1922]: 6.421), argues that “logically aesthetics and ethics are identical. If we are to understand the ethical rules of a society, it is the aesthetic that we must study” (Leach 1954: 12; Arno 2003: 809). Connections between ethics and aesthetics are not new; they have been central to philosophers from Plato to modern thinkers.⁴⁸⁴ Shelton observes that Huichol aesthetics is concerned not so much with notions of beauty as with ethical ideals. For them, ethics and aesthetics may constitute a single field of knowledge. Aesthetics for the Huichol, Shelton observes, is not concerned with a passive reflection, but with an active intention to maintain or adjust the system of ethics that organizes the world and defines appropriate activities and relations within it (Shelton 1992).

In the dialogic process of commodification and deterritorialization of their atavistic ceremony, the traditionally culture-bound aesthetics of Sawau firewalking performers index their intuition of the social, historical cosmos (*kila ni bula vakayalo*) “moving away

⁴⁸⁴ See for example Carroll, Lamarque, Putnam, Booth.

from mythic reality and toward global modernity” (Arno pers. comm.).⁴⁸⁵ However, they are influenced and manipulated they are biased and manipulated by the middlemen (their impresarios), and by the western aesthetics reflected in the tourist enclaves (hotels, cultural centers, international touring), which constantly reinterpret and renegotiate the ‘Other’ to transform it into an exotic marketable product. In this aesthetic abstraction of the commodified product, form and meaning conform to a stereotypical package according to tourist sumptuary law of taste. In Bourdieu’s sense, ‘taste’ functions here to legitimate the power of the socially dominant. Drawing one more time on Croce (1912, 1921, 1929) and Berleant (1991, 2002, 2004), aesthetic perception plays a fundamental role in the art creator’s or performer’s mind, for the ‘authenticity’ of the aesthetic experience provides a powerful means of reappraising and modulating ancestral cultural experience by digging beneath the layers of accrued meanings and cognitive habits.

Following Victor Turner (1985), Schechner (1988, 1994, 2000) elaborated on the interrelationship between social drama and stage or “aesthetic” drama (Turner 1985: 300). Aesthetic drama is almost entirely prearranged, so the participants concentrate on display rather than strategies for achieving goals as in social drama. Aesthetic drama is less instrumental and more ornamental than social drama (e.g., warfare transformed into dance in the Papua New Guinea highlands). Theater or performing arts come into existence when a separation occurs between spectators and performance (Schechner 1988: 126). However, he notes that when the spectators are included as ‘speakers’ in the theatrical event, we have an example of what Gregory Bateson (1972: 178) calls ‘metacommunication’, that is, communication that occurs in the situation in which the

⁴⁸⁵ Email February 24 2003.

interaction takes place. This could also be the case in *vilavilairevo*, although this contact zone appears to be mostly mediated by the emcees and impresarios.

When ritual performances such as the *vilavilairevo* take on the qualities of ‘show business’, Schechner employs a dialogic dyad to determine whether the performance is still a ritual or not. Schechner suggests that if the performance’s purpose is to effect change, then the performance is ritual. However, if the performance’s purpose is mostly to give pleasure, then it is entertainment. He recognizes that the matter is complicated, however, since no performance is purely efficacious or purely entertaining. Applying and expanding on Schechner’s (1974, 1976, 1988, 2000) model to show how negotiation of performance is dialogic, one may detect new categories and modes of representation and visualization. The basic polarity is not between ritual and performing arts or ritual and spectacle, but between efficacy and entertainment. Whether we call a specific performance ‘ritual’, ‘performing arts’, ‘theater’ or ‘spectacle’ depends on context and function. As in the contemporary Fijian and Tahitian firewalking ceremony, efficacy and entertainment are opposed to each other, but as Table 5.1 shows, they form a continuum (Schechner 1976, 1988, 2000).

<u>Efficacy/Ritual</u>	↔	<u>Entertainment/Spectacle</u>
ritual activity		ordinary activity
territorialized		detrterritorialized
internalize occasion		externalize execution
thought-consciousness is primary		activity-spectacle is primary
authenticity		tourist realism
meaning		meaningless
custom/mythical reality		hyper-reality/global modernity
performers' costumes appropriate		performers' costumes redundant
<i>link to an absent Other</i>		<i>only for those here</i>
<i>symbolic time/eternal present</i>		<i>emphasis now/ethnographic present</i>
<i>virtuosity downplayed</i>		<i>virtuosity highly valued</i>
<i>audience participates</i>		<i>audience watches</i>
<i>audience believes</i>		<i>audience appreciates</i>
self-preservation		adaptation
following atavic rules/ethics		adjusting to audience's taste/aesthetics

Table 5.1 Efficacy/ritual versus entertainment/spectacle binary continuum.

Note: Schechner's (1974, 1976, 1988, 2000) original qualities in italics.

For Schechner (2000), performance does not originate in ritual any more than it originates in theater or spectacle: it originates in the binary system. The oscillation between poles is continuous: performance is always in an active state, a continual process of transformation.

Eco-cultural Tourism in Beqa: Resistance or Rhetoric?

Until Ratu Timoci Colatanavanua's death in 1967, several ships, the *Oriana*, *Austria*, *Ramarama* and *Osawa*, regularly called at Beqa island. Tourists then transferred to a smaller vessel, the *Maroro*, which brought them to the shores of Rukua and Dakuibeqa to see the *vilavilavairovo* ceremony. Dakuibeqa at that time had two large *lovo* located in the upper west side of the village. All the villagers were involved in preparing *kiekie*, *salusalu*, arm bands and anklets, large amounts of firewood, food, and costumes for the *meke* performed by the women. The villagers also tended their gardens, estimated in the early 1970s as covering several acres

Crop	Acres October 1972	Acres October 1973
<i>Dalo, Dalo-ni tana</i> (taro, <i>Caladium Esculentum</i>)	60	40
<i>Kumala</i> (sweet potato)	42	40
Tapioca (manioc)	180	120
Vegetables	60	55
Off-season tomatoes	19	15
Copra driers	1 functioning (out of 9)	ibid.

Table 5.2 1972-3 crop cultivation in Beqa (Rigamoto 1973: 50).

In the 1970s, with men increasingly traveling to Viti Levu to perform at the hotels, acreage cultivated in Beqa started dropping. It decreased by 25% between 1967 and 1972 and even more in 1973 (Table 5.2). Navua, the docking point for Beqa and location for the produce market, went from being a buyer's market to a supplier's market. I remember during my trips back and forth with teams of firewalkers that we were always bringing back tomatoes and other vegetables, for nobody grew them anymore in Dakuibeqa.

At the same time, the performance started showing a decline in ritual elaboration. Costumes started to be reused instead of made anew, the size of the *lovo* was halved, and the timing of the firewalk was reduced from about twenty minutes to less than ten, leaving some tourists disappointed (Rajotte 1978: 3; 1982: 127).

Bulou Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga's family decided to gradually repatriate the *vilavilavirevo* ceremony to Beqa.⁴⁸⁶ To make the trip to Beqa more attractive to tourists, they decided to offer hiking tours to historic locales of the Sawau people, including

⁴⁸⁶ They worked in conjunction with Taito Waqavakatoga, the President of the Senate, originally from Naceva village in Beqa, who was evaluating a similar project.

Malovo and a WWII gun site on Korovou ridge, with stops at several waterfalls along the way.⁴⁸⁷ The project was called Beqa Eco-Cultural Tours. This small-scale ecotourism operation would cater to tourists motivated by a desire to learn more about the culture and land. Owned by the local people, it would enable the men in the village to split their time between tending tourists and tending their gardens. Their payment would be 10% of the cash earned; the remaining 90% would be deposited into individual, *mataqali* (clan), or *itokatoka* (extended family) bank accounts to prevent quick dissipation of the money earned.

Vei kemuni ko ni na cakacaka e na bisinisi ogo, keitou sa vakatura (vakavalagi) 'time on, time off'. Ogo na kena i balebale, ni kevaka ko cakacaka e na neitou bisinisi, ni ko sa na cakacaka e na so na siga e na neitou bisinisi kei na so na siga me ia kina na teitei ko kemuni na turaga, ko kemuni na marama na tavitavi kei na tali ibe se na qaravi ni matavuvale me vaka ga ko ni dau vakayacora tu ni bera ni keitou yaco mai. Kevaka e na sega ni muri se vakayacori na neitou kerekere ogo, e sa na oti sara na nomu cakacaka vei keitou e na Beqa Eco-Cultural Tours. Keitou nuitaka ni na i teitei ogo kei na cakacaka e na neitou bisinisi e na bau rawa kina e dua na i lavo lailai me rawa ni vukei kina na matavuvale. Baleta ni neitou kabani e sa vou ka sa qai tauyavutaki ga, sa na dredre sara me i vurevure tauda ni nomuni yau, keitou sa nuitaka ni na rawa ni na vakamamada taka na noda dui colacola ni matavuvale kei na vanua ka me veivuke vata kei na i teitei, na qoligoli, kei na veika tale e so ka a dau vurevure tu mai ni lavo ni bera ni keitou yaco mai ki Dakuibeqa me mai cicivaka na bisinisi ogo.

We hope that the company will become a large company employing most of the Sawau tribe. At the same time, we do not wish to see normal village activities neglected or locally made items replaced with inferior goods. We are suggesting a time on, time off basis. This means that an employee of Beqa Eco-Cultural Tours will work for several days for the company, following which they will be expected to work in their gardens and around their homes. Failure to comply with this pattern may result in not being selected for work with Beqa Eco-Cultural Tours. With the creation of a produce-marketing organization, the time spent gardening together along with the work for Beqa Eco-Cultural Tours might yield a substantial

⁴⁸⁷ The hiking tour follows the *isevusevu* (customary presentation of *yaqona* roots) in the chiefly village of Dakuibeqa.

income. While Beqa Eco-Cultural Tours cannot realistically become the sole income generator in the village of Dakuibeqa, it should certainly develop into a useful supplement to farming, fishing and other traditional sources of income.⁴⁸⁸

According to Rusieli Mua, an expert on ecotourism projects in Fiji and Marika Kuilamo, an expert on sustainable development, a community-based, cooperatively-owned business would be the best formula for a small-scale ecotourism operation like the one under evaluation in Beqa. In May 2005, each head of the six *mataqali* in Dakuibeqa received a copy of the proposal.⁴⁸⁹

In May 2005, I was invited to participate in a discussion on ecotourism in Fiji at the Department of Culture and Heritage in Suva.⁴⁹⁰ The discussion made it clear that the government sees tourism in Fiji as one of the primary, achievable measures for economic and social development. Fiji's Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Native Land Trust Board, the National Trust of Fiji, the Department of Forestry, is sponsoring ecotourism projects of any form through ecotourism grants. Based on the success of ecotourism operations in the Yasawa Islands like Botaira Beach Resort, Korovou Eco-Tour Resort and Kuata Island Resort, since 2000, there have been about 100 individually-owned projects, of which about 40 survived the first three years in operation, showing a total of 20,249 arrivals (Appendix H). Moreover, at the Tourist Investment Conference held by PROFIT Pacific Tourism Investment Conference and Partnership at the Sheraton Hotel Denarau in Nadi (February 1-4, 2005), of 100 projects on the agenda, three were

⁴⁸⁸ Beqa Eco-Cultural Tours operative plan, May 2005.

⁴⁸⁹ At the time of this writing in 2007, it is still at the evaluation and fund-seeking phase.

⁴⁹⁰ Participants included: Rusieli Mua and Marika Kuilamo, both with the Ministry of Tourism; Ratu Felix Colatanavanua, representing Beqa Eco-Cultural Tours; Unaisi Nawalowalo, a lecturer at USP who was completing a thesis comparing ecotourism and entrepreneurship in two small scale eco-tourist projects in Fiji; and Sipirianio Nemani, Acting Director of the Institute of Fijian Language and Culture.

high-profile projects related to Beqa Island and its pristine lagoon. Thus, Mua and Kuilamo emphasized at our meeting the necessity of establishing sustainable non-exploitative development operations in Beqa to maintain the local identity, aspirations and traditions, and custodianship of the land, as well as ensure that the benefits are distributed among the local residents instead of reinforcing the local elite (Mua & Kuilamo pers. comm.)⁴⁹¹

For whom will ecotourism development be sustainable? What may appear sustainable from one point of view is unlikely to be from another. Sustainable development, as Helu-Thaman observes, seems to have more to do with encouraging economic growth by allowing people from developed societies rather than those in local communities to enjoy natural resources (Helu-Thaman 1993: 110). The literature is full of ‘win-lose’ examples showing how ecotourism can become a form of ecological imperialism, with local populations gradually excluded from traditional activities, along with other socio-cultural and environmental impacts.

When I met Konai Helu-Thaman at the University of South Pacific in March 2005, I asked her how to avoid the contradiction between the business of tourism and conservation of cultural heritage (Helu-Thaman pers. comm.).⁴⁹² She pointed to the community-based ‘ecocultural’ Bouma National Heritage Park, visited by an average of 6,000 people yearly.⁴⁹³ Rather than ecotourism per se, it emphasizes the cultural context within which ecotourism occurs (which should be based not on the culture of the tourists and developers). She writes,

⁴⁹¹ Interview May 2 2005 h. 14:30, Suva.

⁴⁹² Interview Mar. 2 2005 h. 9:30, USP, Suva.

⁴⁹³ Other community-based projects are Koroyanitu National Heritage Park (1990) and Tavuni Hill Fort (1992), initiated by NLTB, the Department of Forestry, with cooperation from the European Union and the Fiji Museum (Tavuni).

Not until the commercial imperative and the profit motive are deemphasized will most of our people have a hope of realizing the benefits of ecotourism and other eco concepts. Until then, such ideas will remain only figments on the imagination of academics, wishful thinkers, and conference goers. (Helu-Thaman 1993: 110-11)

Ecotourism is not a panacea. It cannot solve all economic problems and it can lead to new problems. Stanley, after Lindstrom (1994: 77), observes that in Melanesia the bridge between cultural conservation and tourism is constructed in the neologism “kastom tourism” (Stanley 1998: 108-9).

For Beqa, ecotourism is an opportunity to regain control of their *vakavanua* customs, to re-enact and communicate their cultural uniqueness and identity at their discretion, far from hotel stages and imposed schedules. The intent to repatriate the *vilavilavirevo* ceremony is therefore a form of cultural resistance, an indigenous response to expropriation, misuse and epistemological attacks on their gift. The advent of capitalism following colonialism and WWII has coincided with a resumption of ‘bullying’ rituals throughout the Asia-Pacific region. In these revivals, Barker (1998) observes that the indigenous notion of power takes the form of political leadership or resistance. Asserting political power contributes to these revivals as part of the restoration of identity, where the past is used to re-empower a new collective self. I believe that Fijian firewalking, which should not be defined as a ‘bullying’ ritual, was not much affected by the departure of the colonial government, although it was affected by its arrival and the consequent proliferation of the colonial and tourist gaze and commodification of the ritual.

Conclusion

The propitiatory *vilavilavevo* ceremony, traditionally performed only by members of the Sawau lineage on the island of Beqa, was once a custom with only local meaning and held only on special, culturally significant occasions. It is now a daily attraction at hotels in Viti Levu. Because of the importance of the visual, both tourism and the media are involved with spectacle and cultural performance. Indigenous rituals involving ‘primitive’ masculine bravado elicit the fantasies and voyeurism of tourists and media audiences. The firewalking ceremony has become the signature ‘brand’ of Fijian culture. The media and tourism are just two of the more prominent forces that shape ritual performance today, influencing particularly the ways in which ritual traditions are reproduced in contemporary society. This chapter shows how commercialization has altered the Fijian firewalking ceremony in several important aspects.

A central question in the contemporary debates on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is whether tourism is a means for preserving culture in a potentially fossilized, prostituted and alienated state or instead a means for revitalizing and fostering its renegotiation and transformation (Nas 2002: 139). The Fijian firewalking ceremony exemplifies a ritual that has become mainly a spectacle and that has been commodified according to touristic requirements. In a paper given at the University of the South Pacific in the early 1970s on the effects of the tourist trade in Fiji, Peter Thompson (1973: 45) observed that the commodification of the Fijian firewalking ceremony was an example of tourism fostering culture rather than undermining it (see also Crick 1989: 337; Cohen 1988: 383; V. Smith 1989: 16). In the previous chapter, I described the negative effects of the introduction of orthodox Pentecostal churches to Beqa and Fiji in

general. By contrast, the tourist trade has not attempted to eradicate the Sawau tribe's traditional practices.⁴⁹⁴ On the other hand, commodification of culture results in novel modes of cultural representation, with potentially unintended results. The West's objectification of culture has been recognized ever since the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The objectification process ends once the identity of the product is molded by its consumers, as they desire it or imagine it. The product is then ready to find a collocation in their domestic geographies. The literature on tourism is replete with negative examples of how corporate tourism commodifies, objectifies and caricatures native cultures (Crystal 1989; Greenwood 1989; Loukissas 1978; Nash 1982; Trask 1993).

The previous sections demonstrate how the processes of commodification and objectification affect the cultural products themselves. Rituals, as in the case of the *vilavilairevo*, may be shortened, embellished, or otherwise adapted to the tastes of tourists, while cultural meaning collapses (Boorstin 1964; Greenwood 1989). Art and craft products may also change in shape, material or color in response to the impositions of far-away consumers (Appadurai 1986; Cohen 1983). Moreover, when festivals, rituals, ceremonies and costumes become commodified, the human performers may also be objectified and implicated in this process (Babadzan, 1988; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998).

⁴⁹⁴ Nor has tourism incited ethnic competition between Indo-Fijians and ethnic-Fijians, as predicted by Carolyn Henning Brown (1984). In the early 1980s, Indo-Fijians did attempt to get a share of the 'firewalking market' by advertising their own ceremonies in the daily papers. This did not lead to competition between the ethnicities because the tourist industry privileged 'authentic' Fijian firewalking in Fiji. Firewalking is a ritual in South and North Indian tradition (Sahadeo *et al.* 1974; Henning Brown 1984). It was brought to Fiji in the nineteenth century by indentured Indian workers who were devotees of the goddess Devi. The Great Goddess Devi or Maha Devi, 'the Great Mother', is also known as Maari, Durga or Shakti, and is the consort of Siva. The goal of the Hindu firewalkers is to reunite with Devi. They pray to her and perform firewalking and piercing in her honor. Long before World War II, however, the rituals had atrophied and the firewalking practice was abandoned in Fiji (Sahadeo 1974).

In addition, Nuñez (1989) notes that tourists are less likely to ‘borrow’ from their hosts than their hosts are from them, thus precipitating change in the host community. Tourists come and go, but as a host community adapts to tourism, it absorbs tourists’ needs, attitudes and values. Thus, in his quest to experience authenticity through consumption, the tourist turns the ‘authentic’ into a commodity.

Is commodification perforce the enemy of authenticity and cultural identity?

Cohen (1988) contests generalizations about the loss of meaning of local cultures caused by commodification. He argues that popular music does not necessarily become meaningless for the local artist merely because it is commercialized. In his view, even a religious ritual may acquire new meanings for its producers and become a culturally significant representation of themselves for an external public. In other words, the two kinds of meanings are not mutually exclusive and new meanings may be added to old ones. Cohen (1988) concludes that the emergence of a tourist market frequently facilitates the preservation of a cultural tradition and enables its producers to maintain a meaningful local or ethnic identity which they might otherwise lose.

Despite a changed context, natives may perceive socio-cultural continuity between the old and the new situation (Cohen 1988: 383). M. Estellie Smith (1982: 134) argues that societies impacted by tourism are often good examples of change and continuity. Local people frequently interpret novel situations in traditional terms and thus perceive a continuity of cultural meaning which may escape the tourist-observer.

Goldberg and Greenwood observe that the performers of tourist-oriented voodoo shows in Haiti still go in a trance and the touristic and rural voodoo activities coexist without conflict (Goldberg 1983: 488; Greenwood 1982: 27-8). Local people may interpret the

presence of tourists as a sign of the authenticity and continuity of their culture, thus revealing their own capacity to resist, adapt and transform (Errington and Gewertz 1989: 51; Picard 1990: 62). Adams (1992) suggests tourism has intensified Sherpa ethnic identity and provided new terrain for the extension of Sherpa traditions. Even the stages set up every four years at the Festival of Pacific Arts may promote and perpetuate Pacific island cultures and traditions (Stevensen 1999).

Studies on tourism and commodification reinforce what is probably the central theoretical tenet in the literature in recent years: that ethnic identity is not something fixed, but rather is something constantly reinvented or re-imagined. Arno argues that ethnicity is primarily concerned with the basic human problems of personhood and social identification, which in Pacific societies are not viewed in dualist terms (Arno 2002: 227). As Greenwood (1989) argues, tourism elicits and illuminates new processes of cultural construction; prohibiting such cultural change is nonsensical. The Fijian firewalking ceremony represents both resistance and identification with the colonial and modern global markets (see Table 5.1). The ceremony performed by the Sawau people is a diacritic of ethnic cultural identity, a vehicle of self-representation and display of their unique gift before the world. Thus, I avoid using terms like ‘revival’, ‘renaissance’ or ‘reinvigoration’ to describe changes in the ceremony.

It is not necessarily disruptive to place some aspects of a cultural product on stage to reiterate its ‘mark of authenticity’ for outsiders (Graburn 1999: 351; Cohen 1988). Fijian firewalking is not ‘staged’ in the sense of fabricating an impression of authenticity for a tourist audience. Walking on hot stones does not appear any more genuine ‘back stage’ than in front of the stage. In Chapter 2, I pointed out that Fijian firewalking has

lost its verbal explanation. Traditions are not inert objects, they change continually (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; Schechner 2000; Shils 1981; Wagner 1975).

The previous chapters have discussed how the *vilavilairevo* ceremony has not been passively passed from one generation to the next for the last two centuries. Academic dilemmas and empty debates about ‘genuine’ and ‘spurious’ traditions are inappropriate if such traditions are evaluated in a vacuum without consideration for past-present relations, our interpretations of them, or new forms of rights and properties associated with them. In a way, “all traditions—Western and indigenous—are invented, in that they are symbolically constructed in the present and reflect contemporary concerns and purposes rather than a passively inherited legacy” (Linnekin 1991: 446; see also Linnekin & Handler 1984: 288).

Thus, what the tourists pay for—embellished or not by stage managers and firewalking impresarios—has been perceptuated and defined throughout the last couple of centuries by the Sawau performers.⁴⁹⁵ The only difference between the frequent urban (in hotels) and rare rural (in villages) performances is the choreography, which is abbreviated, theatrical and sometime *circensis* in the former, unstaged and understated in the latter. The “solemnity” remains the same in both (Rajotte 1982: 128).

Following Schechner’s (1988) lead, I observe that Fijian firewalking is not a transformation of theater into ritual, but of ritual into theater. In other words, the Fijian firewalkers are neither illusionists nor *nouveau sauvages*.⁴⁹⁶ What the Sawau people offer

⁴⁹⁵ Chapter 2 discussed the precolonial processes of intercultural communication and ritual borrowing between the Sawau and other South Pacific island cultures.

⁴⁹⁶ That is, they are not like the Asaro ‘mudmen’ of Papua New Guinea referred to by Schechner (1988). In the 1960s, a National Geographic Society photographer on assignment in Papua New Guinea paid for a staged performance in the Asaro River valley village of Kurumugi. The name ‘mudmen’ was applied to the performers by tourist agents and the dances were lengthened. The

is not a ‘tourist trap’, a piece of “phoney folk culture” (Forster 1964: 226 quoted in Stymeist 1996: 13), or a “pseudo-event” (Boorstin 1961 quoted in Stymeist 1996: 13). De novo creations and ‘invented traditions’ are attempts to produce a common identity where none previously existed. In the case of Fijian firewalking, or of other traditions evolved over a longer period of time and subsequently commodified, they are neither invented nor emergent.⁴⁹⁷ ‘Emergent authenticity’ is a term coined by Cohen (1988), stressing one aspect of the wider phenomenon of ‘invention of tradition’ (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983). It connotes “a cultural product, or trait thereof, which is at one point generally judged as contrived or inauthentic, may, in the course of time, become generally recognized as authentic even by experts” (Cohen 1988: 279-80).⁴⁹⁸ By contrast, the tradition of Fijian firewalking is for the Sawau people “a testament to the powerful symbolic meanings it continues to provide” to them (de Burlo 1996: 261; see also Jolly 1994). It represents a process through which the past and aspects of Sawau social life derived from the past are valorized in the present, where the tourist provides a new sort of audience (Lindstrom & White 1994: 14).

Trying to predict the future of tourism’s impact is beyond the boundaries of this chapter. The presence of ‘tourist dollars’, as Fijian reporter Lice Movono (2005) subtitled her article on my research on firewalking in Beqa, is not the only factor in the upturn of the *vilavilavevo* ceremony over the last three decades. None of the tourism

people of the region don’t know what the dance is for, since it does not frighten enemies or anyone else; the dance has no relationship with the spirits of the dead, which would appear only after dawn and not after midday when the bus with the tourists arrives (see also Otto and Verloop 1996).

⁴⁹⁷ Similar examples are the South Pentecost Island’s Sa people’s *nagol* (land-dive), New Britain’s North Baining *atut* (fire-dance), or Haitian voodoo

⁴⁹⁸ As discussed in Chapter 2, this process of negotiation was erroneously applied to the Fijian firewalking performance by Wood (1997: 16) and Stymeist (1996: 13).

scholars who have used Fijian firewalking as a paradigm of the detrimental effects and repercussions of tourism have paid attention to the historical processes at work. All of them failed to specify the social links and other factors involved from an emic perspective: customary norms regulating hierarchy, communal labor and reciprocity, dialogic motivations and expectations, diachronic meaning attributed to the experience, negotiation and access of new forms of exchange, and hegemonic forces and agents of change and distortion. Tourism indeed plays a major role, but should not be blamed for the malaise of a whole society or be seen as only arena in which authenticity is staged.

CHAPTER 6

Guarding the Intangible: Part I Cultural Heritage, Tangible Challenges

Introduction: The African Position Paper

On October 10, 2005 I traveled to the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, to attend the cultural meetings programmed in conjunction with the 33rd General Conference to understand the communication channels at transnational level of Pacific Island nations like Fiji, in conjunction with Fiji's national processes of implementation of existing instruments for the protection of cultural heritage. Thanks to a letter of introduction from my Chair, I was admitted as an 'observer' into the *sancta sanctorum* of Place de Fontenoy. Particularly interesting was the 15th session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in Salle IV. A voluminous pamphlet piled among pounds of colorful 'newsletters', 'mini journals', 'media advisories', 'draft timetables', and 'provisional agendas' distributed daily among the delegates emphasized that as the results of the national Periodic Reports for the Asia-Pacific region clearly demonstrate, a regional approach to management planning needs to be elaborated through enhanced regional cooperation and exchange of international and regional expertise, and ore in particular that:

After more than 30 years experience of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention UNESCO, the World Heritage Committee, World Heritage site management authorities, non-governmental organizations, and local stakeholders, have recognized increasingly that effective conservation, management and sustainable development of Word Heritage derives first and foremost from identification of the tangible and intangible heritage values of the properties, and thereafter from developing and

implementing appropriate management plans.⁴⁹⁹

The Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage had called upon their Embassy in Brussels to represent Fiji in the cultural meetings in lieu of Mere Ratunabuabua, for incumbent gubernatorial commitments in Suva did not allow her to travel to France. In Salle IV, I met Tupou Raturaga, a counselor on cultural issues, part of the Fijian delegation arrived from Belgium. While the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention was electing the Republic of Mauritius to the reserved seat of the World Heritage Committee in Salle VIII, item 5.37 was getting the attention of the delegates in Salle I.

Item 5.37 – “the African Position Paper” on the State of the World Heritage in Africa,⁵⁰⁰ was part of an initiative of the Africa Group to develop a strategy and action plan to address the needs of World Heritage in Africa and the creation of a African World Heritage Fund. The African Position Paper basically aligns itself with the African Union’s sectoral plan for culture which adopts a continent-wide agenda as a springboard for Africa’s ‘cultural renaissance’, which in the words of Dawson Munjeri, Former Vice President of ICOMOS for Africa,⁵⁰¹ should be viewed as a “symbiotic relationship”

⁴⁹⁹ “World Heritage Reports 12”: The State of World Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region 2003, p. 56. Published in 2004 by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre with financial contribution from the Japan Funds-in-Trust.

⁵⁰⁰ The African Position Paper was conceptualized within the framework of the new Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU) strategic programme 2004-2007, and was presented and adopted by the 29th Session of UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Durban, South Africa from 10 - 17 July 2005, welcoming the establishment of an African World Heritage Fund.

⁵⁰¹ ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), is a non-governmental organization with headquarters in Paris, France. Founded in 1965, its role is to promote the application of theory, methodology and scientific techniques to the conservation of the architectural and archaeological heritage, based on the principles of the 1964 International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter).

between tangible and intangible heritage. In other words, intangible heritage becomes a tool through which tangible heritage is defined and expressed and through which the inert landscape of objects and monuments is turned into a living archive of cultural values, highlighting the local, regional and international dimension of the intangible heritage read in the context of monuments and sites.⁵⁰²

With Raturaga we discussed how the African Position Paper clearly teaches a lesson to the Pacific Island countries in terms of regional efforts towards a unitary harmonic plan improving representation of their African heritage, which—like the Pacific region—is one of the most under-represented regions in the World Heritage List. A couple of months later, when Mere sent me a copy of the newsletter of the Australian Permanent Delegation to the Pacific Community of UNESCO,⁵⁰³ I was not surprised to find a note from Kenneth Wiltshire⁵⁰⁴ addressing a much larger issue. He argues that only one Pacific country, Fiji, is currently elected in the 58-member Executive Board of UNESCO, which he judges as a “disturbing situation”, for the whole of the Pacific sub-region of 16 Member States is now represented by only one country. The lesson from this event is very clear according to Wiltshire: Pacific campaigning is going to have to begin much earlier and include strong bilateral approaches with candidates being identified much earlier and present at the 33rd General Conference.

⁵⁰² An example made by Munjeri—which could be juxtaposed to the Fijian milieu as well—are the Dogons of Mali where the *Togu Na* is the first structure built when a village is founded. It serves as the centre for story tellers, a court and a place where the ceremonial and farming calendar is decided and where the wisdom of ancestors is passed down to the young by the elders, (in “Place, Memory, Meaning: Preserving Intangible Values in Monuments and Sites”, ICOMOS 14th General Assembly and Scientific Symposium, Victoria Falls Zimbabwe, 27-31 October 2003).

⁵⁰³ *Pacific Link* 2005, 19(3).

⁵⁰⁴ J.D. Story Professor of Public Administration, UQ Business School, University of Queensland and Chairperson Australian National Commission for UNESCO.

It is obviously beyond the scope of this study to investigate the mechanisms of Pacific Island nations' activity of lobbying and liaising in the transnational milieu. However, I believe that the narration of this event should facilitate the introduction of the discourses, denunciations and declarations about safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in conjunction with the legislative and regulatory implementations at national and local levels. This chapter intends to analyze and discuss the meaning of intangible cultural heritage. In Fiji, and elsewhere, native leaders and indigenous-advocacy organizations have embarked on a global campaign to assert control over elements of culture that they consider part of their patrimony: art, music, folklore, even landscapes regarded as sacred. Furthermore, this and the next chapter will examine how the perlocutionary force of these recent measures might reflect on the local reality of Beqa and on the Sawau tribe's intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development.

Defining Intangible Cultural Heritage

In order to frame and analyze issues related to the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, it is important to examine the meaning of the concepts involved, for they may differ within the frameworks, treaties and legislations this study is discussing hereafter.

Definitions of cultural heritage are highly varied and contested. Defining heritage can be the product of a single person or a group of people—it can be personal or social. Regardless, a fundamental question remains to what extent heritage is 'property', or social, intellectual, and spiritual inheritance (Davison 2000; Aplin 2002). Property has the consequence of emphasizing individual rights, implying the possibility of alienation and

of commodification. Heritage on the other hand, while in modern discourses also implying commodification, emphasizes group rights, steering away from ideas of control and possession, towards a sense of belonging and of a shared enterprise, allowing us to recognize the value of intangible culture more easily than property empowering currently disempowered indigenous groups.

Both doctrines in law and anthropology show that human actions, our ideas, customs and knowledge are the most important aspects of this heritage. In the late 1960s UNESCO defined heritage as “the product and witness of the different traditions and of the spiritual achievements of the past and thus an essential element in the personality of peoples”.⁵⁰⁵ In a more recent statement, UNESCO declared that “each indigenous community must retain permanent control over all elements of its own heritage”, heritage being defined as “all those things which international law regards as the creative production of human thought and craftsmanship, such as songs, stories, scientific knowledge and artworks” (Daes 1993: 11-13).

Thus, the heritage in which native peoples have definitive rights includes concepts and thoughts as well as their concrete enactment (Brown 1998). However, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett objects that “heritage is a new mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse in the past... created through a process of exhibition (as knowledge, as performance, as museum display)... adds value to existing assets that have either ceased to be viable (subsistence lifestyles, obsolete technologies, abandoned mines, the evidence of past disasters) or that never were economically productive” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995: 369-70, 1998: 149-50).

⁵⁰⁵“Preamble” of the 15th General Conference of the UNESCO’s meeting in Paris (15-20 October 1968) http://www.unesco.org/culture/laws/works/html_eng/page1.shtml.

While I already contested these ontological arguments in Chapter 5, I should observe that the ‘definitions’ of heritage imply difficult questions about the ‘purposes’ of heritage protection. Heritage is an important economic asset for an indigenous community, but it is also clearly much more. Davison (1991) argues that the complexity of these issues requires a wide definition of heritage, one that acknowledges that, at any given time, some meanings of heritage are likely to be more or less important to different groups of people. Communities produce heritage, and communities must make decisions about heritage. In Fiji, cultural heritage management is concerned with what has been and what will be retained from the past, and how it will be ‘used’ in the present and the future. Contemporary Fiji has inherited the cultural heritage of both ethnic Fijians and its developing multicultural society. This study shows that in Beqa, like in many other communities throughout Fiji, cultural heritage is expressed through both tangible and intangible features, places, objects, rituals, myths, memory, and the social and contemporary significance they each have.

While the ‘physical’ cultural heritage is designed to survive long after the death of the person who produced or commissioned it, the fate of the intangible cultural heritage is much more closely related to its creators as it often depends on oral transmission. The awkward term ‘intangible cultural heritage’ (ICH) is a recent one, growing out of Japan’s living-national-treasures program, established in 1950, and the Japanese Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, where ICH is seen as property, or asset or resource to be protected, appreciated utilized, and managed (Kurin 2002: 145). In the 1970s the discussion of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage stimulated questions about intangible heritage. The result was UNESCO’s 1989

Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, discussed in the next section, which defined terms and strategies for the research, conservation and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage.

Nevertheless, when in the mid 1980s, WIPO⁵⁰⁶ and UNESCO had convened a Group of Experts on the Protection of Expressions of Folklore, there has been a lively debate about the terminology which should be used to describe the creations of a ‘cultural community’. Folklore, as John Comaroff, remarked in a speech to University of Chicago alumni years ago “is one of the most dangerous words in English language because it often obscures a highly unreflective populism” (quoted in Gray & Taylor 1992: 2; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995: 368, 1998: 162). Fanon (1965) conceptualized folklore as a stage, a rite of passage in the creation of a post-colonial national culture. Blakeney reports that the representatives of the Spanish-speaking countries at the 1985 meeting of the Group of Experts took the position that “ ‘folklore’ was an archaism,⁵⁰⁷ with the pejorative connotation of being associated with creations of lower or superseded civilizations” (Blakeney 2005: 3). Over that objection, the 1985 meeting immediately adopted the following definition:

Folklore (in the broader sense, traditional and popular folk culture) is a group-oriented and tradition-based creation of groups and individuals reflecting the expectations of the community as an adequate expression of

⁵⁰⁶ Although The World Intellectual Property Organization’s (WIPO) origin can be traced to the Paris and Berne Conventions adopted in 1883 and 1886 respectively, WIPO was formally established in 1967 as a United Nations specialized agency, like UNESCO under the umbrella of the United Nations.

⁵⁰⁷ The term ‘folklore’ seems to have been used for the first time in 1846 by English archaeologist William J. Thoms, in his letter to *The Athenaeum* to replace ‘popular antiquities’ and ‘popular literature’. Thoms meant to include manners, customs, observations, superstitions, ballads, proverbs and so on, which he summarized as the ‘lore of the people’. It was then adopted in almost all languages as a term to define and cover all the contents understood under the expressions ‘knowledge of the people’ and ‘culture of the people’.

its cultural and social identity; its standards are transmitted orally, by imitation or by other means. Its forms include, among others, language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts.⁵⁰⁸

The misgivings expressed about the negative connotations of the term folklore were deflected by participants at the 1985 meeting who believed that the term had in the meantime obtained a new meaning and it was suitable for the purposes of such a relevant international treaty.⁵⁰⁹ This terminological approach persisted until the conclusion of the World Forum on the Protection of Folklore, convened by WIPO and UNESCO in Phuket in April 1997,⁵¹⁰ where some panelists referred to the negative connotations and eurocentric definition of the term ‘folklore’, criticizing the western attitude to folklore as something ‘dead’ to be collected and preserved, rather than part of an evolving living tradition (Janke 1997).

On that occasion, Mould-Iddrissu⁵¹¹ observed that the western conception of folklore tended to focus on artistic, literary and performing works, whereas for the indigenous communities directly concerned, like the African ones, it was more broad, encompassing all aspects of cultural heritage, a ‘living heritage’ that is an integral part of their lives and whose character is necessarily evolutionary, in the sense that it is a living and continually evolving tradition (see Janke 1997).

Despite these differences of approach, there seems to be an agreement on the

⁵⁰⁸ This definition was elaborated in the resultant *WIPO/UNESCO Model Provisions for National Laws for the Protection of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and Other Prejudicial Actions*.

⁵⁰⁹ Report [1985] Copyright: Monthly Review of the World Intellectual Property Organization, 40 at 41. In Blakeney 2005: 3.

⁵¹⁰ The World Forum was convened in response to the recommendations in February 1996 of the WIPO Committee Experts on a possible Protocol to the Berne Convention and the Committee of Experts on a Possible Instrument for the Protection of the Rights of Performers and the Producers of Phonograms.

⁵¹¹ Chief State Attorney, Ministry of Justice of Ghana and Legal Director at the Commonwealth Secretariat.

retention of two principal criteria for the definition: anonymity and traditional character, to which is occasionally added the oral mode of transmission (Lucas-Shloetter 2004: 263; Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000: 6). The WIPO and UNESCO *Model Provisions for National Laws on the Protection of Expressions of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and other Prejudicial Actions* (hereafter *Model Provision*) discussed in the next chapter, define the term ‘expressions of folklore’ in line with the findings of the Committee of Governmental Experts on the Safeguarding of Folklore⁵¹², and provides that expressions of folklore are understood as “productions consisting of characteristic elements of the traditional artistic heritage developed and maintained by a community in the country or by individuals reflecting the traditional artistic expectations of such a community.”⁵¹³

The *Model Provisions* use the words ‘expressions’ and ‘productions’ rather than ‘works’ to underline the fact that the provisions are *sui generis*, rather than part of copyright. It has been observed that only ‘artistic’ heritage is covered by the *Model Provisions*. This means that, among several other things, traditional beliefs, cosmogony, scientific views, and traditional practices separated from possible artistic forms of their expression, would not fall within the scope of the proposed definition of ‘expressions of folklore’.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹² Convened in Paris by UNESCO in February 1982.

⁵¹³ *Model Provisions for National Laws on the Protection of Expressions of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and other Prejudicial Actions*, Published by UNESCO and WIPO, 1982, Section 2, Protected Expressions of Folklore.

⁵¹⁴ The *Model Provisions* offer an illustrative enumeration of the most typical kinds of expressions of folklore. They are subdivided into four typical genres according to the forms of the ‘expressions’: verbal (folk tales, folk poetry and riddles), musical (folk songs and instrumental music), of the human body (folk dances, plays and artistic forms of rituals) and tangible expressions (drawings, paintings, carvings, sculptures, pottery, terra-cotta, mosaic, woodwork, metalware, jewelry, basket weaving, needlework, textiles, carpets, costumes, musical instruments and architectural forms) The category ‘architectural forms’ appear in square brackets in the *Model Provisions* to show the hesitation which accompanied their inclusion, leaving it up to each

The majority of national laws that provide protection to folklore do not contain a list of examples.⁵¹⁵ In 1999, Fiji's Law Reform Commission passed the Copyright Act, largely based on the United Kingdom Copyright, Design and Patents Act of 1988. The only reference to 'folklore' is mentioned in its Part 1 – Preliminary, when under the subtitle "Interpretation", public performance is defined:

In the case of a work other than an audiovisual work- reciting, playing, dancing, acting or otherwise performing the work (which term includes an expression of folklore) either directly or by means of any device or process.⁵¹⁶

Despite the criticisms and limitations of the term folklore which made UNESCO ban the term after its 1989 *Recommendation*, the term resisted until today, in fact we will hear it several times in the course of this study, emerging from official national and international documents. It unanimously seems preferable to consider folklore only as being the expressions of traditional artistic creation, excluding traditional beliefs and scientific traditions, a 'sub-totality' of the cultural heritage of a nation (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 265). Only recently, at the 1997 World Forum on the Protection of Folklore, the Indigenous Australian representatives expressed a preference for the term "Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property", which had been coined by Greek jurist Erica-Irene Daes, Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.⁵¹⁷

country to decide whether or not to include such forms in the realm of protected expressions of folklore.

⁵¹⁵ Except the Benin, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda and Samoa copyright laws (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 264).

⁵¹⁶ Fiji Copyright Act [1999] Part 1 – Preliminary.

⁵¹⁷ "1967, 1982, 1984: Attempts to Provide International Protection for Folklore by Intellectual Property Rights", WIPO doc., UNESCO-WIPO/FOLK/PKT/97/19 (March 21, 1997), 15, cited in Blakeney 2005: 4.

To accommodate the concerns of those critics of the narrowness of folklore two terms entered the arena: ‘Traditional Knowledge’ (TK) and ‘Traditional Cultural Expressions’ (TCEs) often simply reduced in the acronym TKEC.⁵¹⁸ Nevertheless, confusion and some contradiction in terms still persist in the Eurocentric terminological legal formalities and precepts employed by policy makers, experts and observers. On the one hand, ‘traditional cultural expressions’ and ‘expressions of folklore’ (EoF) are yet used interchangeably as synonyms and interpreted as having identical meaning (see Kallinikou 2005: 1).⁵¹⁹ Several commentators observe that indigenous communities do not make a difference between what is ‘art’ and what is ‘science’, thus the ‘restrictive’ concept of folklore is often abandoned in favor of ‘traditional knowledge’. The two terms, ‘folklore’ and ‘traditional knowledge’ are frequently used as if they are discrete parallel categories of culturally-specific knowledge (see Lucas-Schloetter 2004; Dutfield 2003).

In a recent essay: “Spiritual but not Intellectual? The Protection of Sacred

⁵¹⁸ The acronym ‘TKEC’ is hereafter employed in this study when the two terms traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions are conflated.

⁵¹⁹ A recent questionnaire prepared by the Secretariat of the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore 7th Session (Nov. 1-5, 2004) describes ‘traditional cultural expressions’: “Expressions of traditional culture/expressions of folklore may be either intangible, tangible, or most usually, a combination of the two. Culture is in a permanent process of production; it is cumulative and innovative. So, the term ‘traditional’ does not mean ‘old’ but rather that the cultural expressions derive from or are based upon tradition, identity or associated with an indigenous or traditional people and may be made or practiced in traditional ways. Traditional cultural expressions/expressions of folklore often lack an identifiable creator, having been passed on from generation to generation by imitation or orally, and they often connote cultural and spiritual values and beliefs. Even where an individual has created a tradition-based work, for which he or she may claim copyright or other IP rights, there are often parallel community interests in the work, usually interests recognized by indigenous and customary laws.

Cultural expressions include music, stories, art, handicrafts, musical instruments, words, names and insignia, performances, textile, carpet and jewelry designs, and forms of architecture, to name only a few examples.

Each country and its communities, however, should decide which forms of cultural expressions should be protected and which terms best describe them. See further WIPO/GRTKF/IC/6/3.”

Intangible Traditional Knowledge”, Gervais (2003) proposes a simple matrix to frame the concept of ‘traditional knowledge’, which can be re-arranged as shown below:

SACRED TANGIBLE Including property rights in tangible objects used as part or pertaining to something sacred (e.g., sacred sites).	SACRED INTANGIBLE Including intellectual property and other intangible rights applicable to the costume, choreography and visual media of a sacred performance.
SECULAR TANGIBLE Including tangible arts and crafts (to which intangible rights may also apply), and it may also be extended to apply to natural resources.	SECULAR INTANGIBLE Including rights in photographs, choreographies, music or audiovisual productions used in non-sacred events and ceremonies and often for sale to tourists.

Table 6.1 Categories of Traditional Knowledge

If the boundary between secular and sacred is very subjective and always more difficult to assert and isolate from the ‘public domain’, the term ‘traditional knowledge’ changes significantly the discourse. While folklore is a ‘jolly’ term, typically discussed in terms of copyright (*inter alia* Lucas-Schloetter 2004; Brown 1998; Puri 1998, 1988; Blain & De Silva 1991; Blakeney 2005, 1999, 1995), traditional knowledge also embraces the traditional knowledge of plants and animals in medical treatment and in nourishment.

Traditional knowledge has been variously defined as “innovations and practices in the context of conservation of equitable use of biological resources”,⁵²⁰ “heritage of indigenous peoples”,⁵²¹ “traditional medicinal knowledge in the realm of health

⁵²⁰ Art. 8(j), Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992.

⁵²¹ United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1995/26, as revised in E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/26).

policy”,⁵²² “expressions of folklore within a framework of intellectual property protection”,⁵²³ “folklore or traditional and popular culture within a construction meant to protect culture”,⁵²⁴ and “intangible cultural heritage”.⁵²⁵ Independently from the terminological problem, more and more voices are being raised in favor of applying broader definitions to folklore (Twarog 2004), such as that of Rwanda and Benin copyright legislations, which apply to “the totality of the traditions and literary, artistic, religious, scientific, technological and other productions”⁵²⁶ (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 264).

These efforts aimed at labeling indigenous heritage and knowledge, eventually imposing a uniform set of terms, rules and codes, are naturally bringing up reminiscences of the Pacific region’s colonial past, and its failure to recognize that the ultimate source of knowledge and creativity is the land itself where the products of the land are extensions of the land (Strathern 2001, 2005).⁵²⁷ A recent example of indigenous epistemology, is offered by the controversial Wai 262 claim currently before the Waitangi Tribunal, founded upon the rights mentioned in Art. 2 of the Treaty of

⁵²² World Health Organization, Document WHO/EDM/TRM/2000.

⁵²³ UNESCO-WIPO, *Model Provisions for National Laws on the Protection of Expressions of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and other Prejudicial Actions* (1982), Annex II, Section 2.11.

⁵²⁴ UNESCO Recommendation for the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (1989).

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Art. 3 of the Rwandan Law Governing Copyright, dated 15 November 1983; Art. 10 of the Benin Law, dated 15 March 1984 on the Protection of Copyright.

⁵²⁷ Rather than attempting to devise a new tenurial system designed to meet Fijians’ needs, its first colonial governor, Sir Arthur Gordon (viz. Lord Stanmore), under the influence of the of 19th century linear social-evolutionary theories and of a misplaced sense of intimate acquaintance with Fijian language and culture, based the legal system of Fijian land tenure on what he thought were ancient principles of communal ownership. Hence, a series of Commissions were charged with the task of investigating these ‘ancient principles’ and codifying them into law, imposing a uniform inflexible set of laws on a people whose pattern of landownership showed a kaleidoscopic fluidity (France 1969).

Waitangi⁵²⁸, referring to both tangible and intangible dimensions of a tribal groups' estate, including knowledge, sacred sites, carvings, Maori medicine, biodiversity, genetics, Maori cultural images, symbols and designs, their use and development, and also their associated indigenous, cultural and customary heritage rights (Van Meijl 2007: 7).

From an indigenous perspective, clan rights to sacred knowledge cannot be separated from rights in land, clan's sacred stories and rituals are often focused on a specific part of their land and are seen as essential to its continued well-being. Thus, Brown (2003a) argues that community rights in traditional cultural expressions must be approached as one element or reflection of 'native title', a term that in the Australian context refers to Aboriginal land rights. Brown is referring to the revolutionary 1992 decision of Australia's High Court in *Mabo and Others v. Queensland*⁵²⁹ (hereafter *Mabo*) which reversed more than a century of legal precedent. The decision recognized that the Aborigenes had a pre-existing system of customary property law. The *Mabo* case and reversed prior thinking which assumed that lands were unoccupied and therefore under the power of the Crown except in cases where the native population could establish traditional ownership.

With *Mabo* the burden of the proof shifted to the Australian government which

⁵²⁸ *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* was signed on February 6, 1840 at Waitangi in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand. Art. 2 guarantees the Maori "the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess".

⁵²⁹ The action which brought about the famous decision ([No 2] (1992) 175 CLR 1) had been led by Eddie Mabo, David Passi and James Rice, all from the Meriam people. The action was brought as a test case to determine the legal rights of the Meriam people to land on the islands of Mer (Murray Island), Dauar and Waier in the Torres Strait, which were annexed to the state of Queensland in 1879. The Australian High Court recognized that Australia was not simply an 'empty piece of land' when the Captain Cook sailed up the coast in 1770 and claimed the eastern half of a continent which had already been occupied for at least 40,000 years.

was obligated to show that there were no prior occupants or that traditional owners had voluntarily abandoned their lands. The *Mabo* case, and four years later a decision known as *Wik*⁵³⁰ which acknowledged Aboriginal claims to grazing districts, opened the eyes of the Australian Courts to the role customary law concerning native title was playing in the Australian legal systems. By the time the landmark *Bulun Bulun* lawsuit—discussed at the end of this chapter—was ready to be heard in Darwin, both federal and state Australian governments “had become exquisitely sensitive to issues of indigenous land rights and hostile toward the accumulation of new legal precedent that could further roil the turbulent waters of native title” (Brown 2003a: 47). The *Bulun Bulun* case stresses the supposedly unbreakable link between land tenure and traditional cultural expressions (Brown *ibid.*).

Thus, one question that arises is about the criteria that should be applied to guarantee the ‘authenticity’ of the traditional cultural expressions’ or ‘expressions of folklore in question in each case. How does the concerned community express a consensus? The *Model Provisions*, for example, states on this issue that the need for consensus and authenticity implicitly follows from the rule requiring that elements be ‘characteristic’, that is to say that they embody the traditional cultural heritage. The Commentary on the *Model Provisions* states that “elements generally regarded as characteristic are usually authentic expressions of folklore recognized as such by tacit consensus of the community concerned.”⁵³¹

Thus, Lucas-Schloetter wonders what criterion must be applied to determine

⁵³⁰ *Wik Peoples v. Queensland* (1996) 187 CLR 1. The High Court of Australia ruled that pastoral leases do not automatically give exclusive possession to the pastoralist, and therefore do not necessarily extinguish native title. This had been a major assumption upon which the Commonwealth Native Title Act had first been drafted.

⁵³¹ Commentary on the Model Provisions.

whether the community concerned is sufficiently representative to be able to be at the origin of a folklore expression capable of being protected. In other words she asks: when does a work fail to qualify as an expression of folklore because the creating group is too small? (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 265). This argument brings up a series of poignant questions raised by the next section, which can be summarized by asking: how can culture be preserved, weighed, and appraised?

What is ‘traditional’ about TKEC is not their antiquity, but the way they are acquired and used. Barsh (1999: 75) observes that it is the social process of learning and sharing culture and knowledge that lies at the very heart of its ‘traditionality’. Building on Barsh (1999) and Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983), much of these cultural expressions may be quite new, but they carry a social meaning, a legal character, entirely unlike the knowledge indigenous peoples acquire from settlers and industrialized societies. Graham Dutfield⁵³² (2003), points out that knowledge held and generated within traditional societies can be ‘new’ as well as ‘old’. Consequently, while this knowledge is handed down from one generation to another, this does not mean that what each generation inherits is what it passes on. Culture and knowledge are not static, they develop and evolve incrementally each generation.

Theorizing Intangible Cultural Heritage

Brown (2003a, 2003b) points out that unlike questions of monetary reparations or the return of indigenous lands, struggles over intangible resources lead to vexing

⁵³² Graham Dutfield is Senior Research Associate at the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and Academic Director of the UNCTAD-ICTSD Project on IPRs and Sustainable Development.

questions of origins and boundaries that are commonly swept under the rug in public discussions, which tend to treat art, stories, performances, music and traditional knowledge as self-evidently the property of identifiable groups. It goes without saying that if we turn culture into property, its uses will be defined and directed by the law, and culture is going to become the focus of litigations, legislations and other form of bureaucratic control.

Glossing Brown (ibid.), this study believes that the crux of the problem is not to be found in different or irreconcilable views of ownership, even where these exist, (e.g., the case of the Sawau tribe). More poignant is the matter of ‘dignity’. Thus, Brown’s main theoretical question “who owns native culture?” should be rephrased asking instead how can we promote respectful treatment of native cultures and indigenous forms of self-expression within mass societies (see Brown 2003a: 10). And how this treatment could become rightful in case of intangible native cultural expressions and traditional knowledge like rituals, performances and unrecorded oral history.

The message is that we should be very wary of treating culture as ‘tradition’, or placing on it the vintage label of ‘heritage’, as something that more than anything needs to be preserved. Cultures may come from the past, but they are also made and remade in the present, as the Sawau’s *vilavilavirevo* ceremony, or from a contemporary artistic perspective, the activities of the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture in Suva⁵³³.

⁵³³ This thoughts emerged from my interviews with Epeli Hau‘ofa, Director of the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture at the University of the South Pacific, Laucala Campus, could be summarized in the opening address Hau‘ofa gave in Sydney on September 27, 2000 at the James Harvey Gallery, used in the pre-preface of the working document for the Regional Meeting of Experts on Arts Education in the Pacific (UNESCO) held in Nadi, Fiji, 25-29 November 2002: “We are not interested in imitating [Western art]... it is time to create things for ourselves, create to established standards of excellence which match those of our ancestors... At the Centre for Oceanic Arts and Cultures [sic] at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, we are trying to

Indigenous peoples are not ‘romantic relics’ from a lost time, deprived of a contemporary voice. The point is not to ‘preserve’ intangible native cultural expressions, with the risk of freezing culture in a historic moment and pronouncing it dead,⁵³⁴ but to discuss the judicious aspects, initiatives and development of workable policies and instruments for the protection of cultural property and cultural privacy outside intellectual property.

The following chapter offers an in-depth analysis of the existing legal regimes regarding the protection of cultural expressions and the *sui generis* instruments for the modification of western intellectual property laws. The study of the *vilavilairevo* and of its custodian-clan in Beqa, allowed me to scrutinize a series of tools and possible solutions emerging at national and transnational level, whose objectives could be grouped in three broad categories: preservation, protection and promotion. Twarog (2004) in an essay focused on the traditional knowledge, stakeholders policy dialogues and calls for international protection, outlines a menu of possible elements of holistic *sui generis* systems for the preservation, protection and promotion of traditional knowledge.⁵³⁵ While Chapter 7 will discuss in depth the issue of ‘protection’, with its interconnected discourse of intellectual property rights, and Chapter 8 will be touching upon the issues of ‘promotion’, hereafter we can briefly discuss the significance and problems associated to

create artforms—visual, dance, music—that transcend our individual culture... [We seek] ways of creating new regional forms and movements, and encourage people to share and celebrate these with us.” (cited in Joubert 2002: 2).

⁵³⁴ Among others, Noriko Aikawa, at the time of the interview Director Intangible Heritage Unit, UNESCO, in particular her ambivalent statement: “Culture is not static, it evolves and we need to remain aware of this. Nor must we try to preserve all the traditional and popular cultures. They cover too vast a domain for that to be possible...” (Williams 1999: 12).

⁵³⁵ The author is an Economic Affairs Officer in the Trade, Environment and Development Branch, International Trade Division, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). She specifies that for the purpose of this essay, traditional knowledge or ‘TK’, refers to the “ ‘knowledge, innovations, and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles’, as well as ‘indigenous and traditional technologies’ (Convention on Biological Diversity, Articles 8(j) and 18.4)”.

the idea of ‘preservation’.

The main theoretical question appears to be: should culture be preserved at the risk of fossilization and alienation from the living sociocultural source, or will preservation help in revitalizing it and fostering the invention of tradition? (Nas 2002: 139). Twarog believes that often the indigenous communities’ youth no longer feel ‘proud’ of their heritage and way of life, considering it to be old fashioned, and thus have little incentive to be recipients of the TKEC held by the elders. For this reason, raising awareness of the value of TKEC and of their cultural heritage may help. Raising awareness is aimed at enhancing *in situ* preservation, the preservation of TKEC as a living evolving body of knowledge. Steps can also be taken to preserve TKEC in an *ex situ* manner, namely through TKEC documentation, registries or databases, which play an important role both in the present and the near future, keeping it alive in the indigenous communities (Twarog 2004: 64).⁵³⁶ Similarly, Forsyth (2003) believes in the power of awareness-raising among communities towards the potential value of traditional knowledge and also genetic resources, recalling the World Intellectual Property Organization Fact Finding Mission, where it was suggested that awareness-raising be introduced in schools⁵³⁷.

Regardless of the inherently flexible nature of culture, one of the main contradictions of these programs of preservation is inevitably engendered when ‘the local’ is preserved by interference of ‘the global’ (Handler 2002: 144). Handler for example asks how many of those ‘masterpieces’ of the oral and intangible heritage of

⁵³⁶ We will return to the importance of determining access rights to these registries in the following sections.

⁵³⁷ WIPO 2001: II, 78.

humanity proclaimed by the UNESCO program are empowered and institutionally supported? (Handler *ibid.*). Moreover, who proposes which projects must be supported, and how much political influence its proponents can muster? What is the interrelation between criteria of outstanding cultural and aesthetic value on the one hand, and risk of disappearance, on the other? Who selects? Who decides the criteria of selection?

Richard Kurin⁵³⁸, who declares himself to have been a ‘skeptical’ member of the Jury of the 2001 first UNESCO Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, argues that while NGOs may nominate, the candidates are named by member states of UNESCO. In other words, he argues that culture defined and selected by national governments may not be the best basis for deliberative and dispassionate consideration (Kurin 2002: 145). Ralph Regenvanu, Director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, commented about the Second Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity that it was not sufficiently demonstrated that practitioners of that cultural heritage were sufficiently involved in developing the Proclamation’s action plan and most important being actively involved in its implementation.

In fact, often scholars and policy makers put together the candidature file without consultation with practitioners to assure that the Proclamation complies to UNESCO ideals, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus, Tonga’s *lakalaka*⁵³⁹ was proclaimed but with some reservations, because it was considered closely

⁵³⁸ Richard Kurin is the director of the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. In 1999 Kurin organized a joint Smithsonian-UNESCO conference on international attempts to safeguard traditional cultures. He currently serves on the UNESCO jury for the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

⁵³⁹ At the Regional Meeting on the Promotion of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for Europe and Northern America (Kazan, Russia, 15-17 December

associated with ‘royalty’. Regenvanu believes that the *lakalaka* ‘proclamation’ would automatically assume that “monarchy system in Tonga is good”, undermining the concept of democracy (Regenvanu 2004: 62) The same could be said of the Vedic chanting of India practiced by the Brahmin caste.

I believe better outcomes, more reasonable and focused, come from the individual efforts of anthropologists (ethnographers, ethnomusicologists) in aiding local traditions *in situ*. In this perspective, *The Sawau Project*, discussed in Chapter 8, could be read as a source of ‘food for thought’, showing that applied anthropological work could inform and activate the mechanisms of protecting indigenous cultural heritage *in situ*, rather than misconceptualize and objectify them *ex situ*. The diverse contexts in which intangible cultural heritage has become a central concern have at the same time transformed the meaning, use, extent, and possibilities of the concept of cultural heritage per se.

Cultural heritage, in ultimate analysis is a growth area of concern in the world, yet is vastly under-theorized, its lacks a clear technical terminology, and has a paucity of

2004), Adrienne Kaeppler presented *lakalaka* as “one genre of a rich Tongan poetry/music/dance repertoire. It is an historic form that retains its uniqueness in the aesthetics (*heliaki*) of poetry, sound, and movement while maintaining its relevance for contemporary society. *lakalaka* are major artistic productions that combine history, politics, and entertainment as sung group speeches with choreographed movements. Each *lakalaka* ranges in length from twenty to forty minutes and encodes the oratorical voice enlivened as a sung and danced performance... *Lakalaka*, with their oratorical power, are central to social activity through which fundamental cultural values are constructed and passed from generation to generation.... In summary, *lakalaka* are concerned with the metaphorical validation of Tongan social forms. Composed by culturally and aesthetically knowledgeable individuals, delivered in an aesthetically charged atmosphere, sung and moved by aesthetically motivated men and women, received and evaluated by receptive audiences, performers and audience members combine politics with poetry. In effect, the preservation and revitalization of the *lakalaka*, now in progress, will be the preservation and revitalization of Tongan culture.” (Kaeppler 2004: 1,4). In Tonga the Committee for the Preservation and Revitalization of the *lakalaka*, under the aegis of the Tonga Traditions Committee has a five to ten years plan in accordance with the traditional composers and is working with the Copyright Office to evaluate the protection of existing texts and new compositions.

systematic data, analytic methods, evaluative work and an academic, disciplinary base.⁵⁴⁰

Cultural Heritage is emerging as a crossover rubric of ever-expanding scope in diverse arenas, in the arts, in the humanities, in the human and cultural rights movements, in new paradigms of economic development, in the politics as a way to exploit the potential of new multicultural legislations, but we have yet to clearly articulate both the fault lines and common ground of these efforts. Thus if the UNESCO's programs linked to intangible cultural heritage safeguarding (like Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity,⁵⁴¹ or the Establishment of "National Living Human Treasures" Systems),⁵⁴² can encourage the intellectual development of the field, it will have a positive effect.

Turning Thick Lore into Soft Law

In order to understand the legal process, it is fundamental to reconstruct the problem historically. The topic of the protection of TKEC, unlike for instance the question of the protection of genetic resources, is not 'new'. For a number of years now, the problem of the legal protection of TKEC has been discussed within the more general

⁵⁴⁰ A recent program funded by the Rockefeller Foundation Program in Creativity and Culture "Theorizing Cultural Heritage" is currently hosted at the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. From 2004 to 2007 six fellows, humanities-oriented thinkers, for each of the three years of work on the theoretical development of the concept of cultural heritage examine the relationship between cultural heritage and political representations (2004-2005), economic pursuits (2005-2006), and the arts (2006-2007). www.folklife.si.edu/.

⁵⁴¹ After the entry into force of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted by the UNESCO General Conference on October 17th in Paris, Smeets announced that "no further Proclamations of Masterpieces will be made (Art. 31(3)) and the items already proclaimed Masterpieces shall be incorporated in the Representative List (Art. 31(1)). The criteria for inscription on the Representative List, to be developed by the Committee (Art. 16(2)), shall not be prejudged by this incorporation" (Smeets 2004: 45).

⁵⁴² The Establishment of "National Living Human Treasures" Systems is embedded in the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. For its historical development.

framework of the protection of indigenous resources, particularly of traditional knowledge (see Lucas-Schlotter 2004: 262).

According to Kurin (2004: 67), back in the 1950s the specific idea of an international legal instrument was initially following two different paths. One was more technical, legalistic, with multilateral discussion evaluating the application to ‘folklore’ and indigenous culture. The second one, more idealist and chauvinistic, commenced in the post WWII era’s Japan, when various programs were launched to offer recognition and support to those traditions that embody Japan’s national cultural patrimony. The *Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties*,⁵⁴³ completed in 1950, represents a benchmark in this field and one of the first examples of ‘national inventories’. Back in the 1950s, Japan was defining ‘tangible’ and ‘intangible’ cultural properties, and people as ‘living human treasures’, with the utopist vision of this representing the very survival of their society. Soon, various other programs with similar concerns emerged in other countries, Republic of Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, France, Romania, the Czech Republic, Poland and the United States.

Discussions on this subject were also held in the 1960s at the initiative of the newly independent African countries in their efforts to affirm their cultural and hence political identity. The development of recording and broadcasting technologies and then of television and cinema have, in the course of the years, led to a commodification of TKEC on a global scale without due respect being given to the cultural and economic interests of the communities from which they originate and without any of the revenue

⁵⁴³ Various heritage conservation laws date back to the Dajo-kan, the government agency between the Meiji Restoration (1873), and the present cabinet system post-1950 (i.e., ‘Old Shrine and Temple Preservation Law, 1987). Under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties (1950 No.214, revised 1954), the Central Government listed properties.

from such exploitations of indigenous culture benefiting the peoples who are its authors (Lucas-Schlotter 2004: 259).⁵⁴⁴

In addition, the development of the tourism industry on the one hand and the increasing demand of consumers for ‘primitive’ and ‘tribal’ art on the other, have contributed to a considerable growth in the forms and intensity of the commodification of traditional expressions of culture. For indigenous communities, in Beqa and around the world, traditional cultural expressions constitute the basis of their collective cultural identity, and its protection today is the subject of a discussion within the more general framework of their right to self-determination.

Two series of arguments started emerging and being put forward by indigenous communities concerning criticism of the lack of regulations of the commodification of TKEC. The first one involves the cases where the indigenous communities themselves are involved in this exploitation and their demands are naturally of an economic nature. Nordmann (2001 quoted in Lucas-Schloetter 2004) points out that for them it is a question not only of being involved directly in the revenues generated by such exploitation, but also of being able to control the uses that are made of their TKEC and of excluding outsiders from the community from the market, precisely what we have seen happening with the Sawau tribe (Chapter 5).

The second argument involves the demands of non-economic nature, often put forward from the indigenous community. Chapter 5 has shown that first of all there is the question of protecting against ‘distortion’ of their own TKEC, or the use of them in a

⁵⁴⁴ See UNESCO-WIPO, *Model Provisions for National Laws on the Protection of Expressions of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and other Prejudicial Actions*, I. Introductory Observations, No. 2, discussed in Chapter 7.

context alien to their tradition. Chapter 5 has also shown that the demands ‘in the moral domain’ may also conversely concern cases where the custodians of the TKEC object to not being mentioned in the exploitation of their TKEC. Moreover, we have already discussed in the same chapter that a specific protection is demanded for those TKEC, that are of a sacred or secret character and that for their traditional owners and custodians, the use, exploitation or appropriation of a symbol with a highly revered, inviolate connotation constitutes an offence and invasion of their sacrosanct beliefs. Certain TKEC are intended for a restricted circle of persons, and any disclosure outside this circle is regarded by those concerned as being a violation of mandatory rules (Lucas-Schlotter 2004).

The term ‘cultural heritage’ is evolving. Initially the term was restricted to structural objects such as monuments, palaces and religious temples. These represented the category of ‘tangible cultural heritage’. In the 1970s, the attention started shifting towards a new category, yet without a precise connotation, but commonly referred today as intangible cultural heritage.⁵⁴⁵ In 1972, UNESCO adopted the *Convention for the Protection of the World’s Cultural and Natural Heritage*, managed by the World Heritage Centre.⁵⁴⁶ This convention’s primary objective was to provide a legal mechanism that could ensure the safeguarding of tangible heritage for future generations. Although a number of member states conveyed a strong interest in recognizing the importance of intangible heritage, its provisions did not apply to intangible culture in respect of a certain legal formalism which initially did not recognized the possible links

⁵⁴⁵ The UNESCO Division of Intangible Cultural Heritage defines intangible cultural heritage (also known as “living cultural heritage”) “the systems of knowledge, philosophical and spiritual, used by humans to pursue creative activities”. <http://portal.UNESCO.org/culture/en/>.

⁵⁴⁶ The WHC organization is a branch of UNESCO.

among the two.⁵⁴⁷

On November 15, 1989, the 25th session of the UNESCO General Conference passed the *Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore*, the first to recognize the ‘significance’ of intangible cultural heritage. The convention defined folklore (or traditional and popular culture) as “the totality of tradition-based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group or individuals and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect its cultural and social identity; its standards and values are transmitted orally, by imitation or by other means. Its forms are, among the others, language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts.”

Unfortunately, this recommendation evoked little interest in its applications despite the strong feelings for the protection of intangible cultural heritage. The Member States ignored the requirements addressed to them on the first page of the *Recommendation*. These included applying its conditions, putting its principles and actions into effect, bringing it to the attentions of authorities and institutions concerned with folklore, and finally submitting reports to UNESCO on the actions they have taken in regard to the recommendation. When in February 1990 the Director-General of UNESCO sent a letter to Member States as a reminder to take the necessary steps for the

⁵⁴⁷ During my participation to the 15th session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in Paris in October 2005, several examples linking intangible and tangible heritage were presented, e.g., the Boysun district of Surkhandarya region in Uzbekistan, “one of the oldest inhabited places in the world... Its traditional rituals represent a vital factor in cultural identity, promotion of creativity and the preservation of cultural diversity” (World Heritage Reports 2003: 72). The World Heritage Committee’s Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS, IUCN, ICCROM) are stressing the importance of encouraging the participation of traditional and religious custodians and local communities in the presentation and conservation of World Heritage Properties. “In the Pacific, enhanced participation of indigenous peoples in the management of World Heritage properties is a top priority” (World Heritage Reports 2003: 73).

implementation of the *Recommendation* and to submit reports to him on all actions taken nobody replied, and only after a second reminder six countries submitted reports, confirming a negative pre-evaluation report (Aikawa 2001: 14).⁵⁴⁸ Only in February 2004, UNESCO's Intangible Heritage Section Director, Rieks Smeets, admitted that the *Recommendation* "was not extremely successful and that as a soft law"⁵⁴⁹ instrument, is not binding at all" (Smeets 2004: 39).⁵⁵⁰

To combat the world's passive reaction to the *Recommendation*, the International Council of Organizations for Folklore Festivals and Folk Art (CIOFF), an non-governmental organizations having a formal consultative relation with UNESCO, made a valuable contribution to UNESCO's efforts to promote the *Recommendation* (Aikawa 2001: 14).⁵⁵¹ At the onset of the 1990s, UNESCO was facing a new reality. After the end of the Cold War, former Communist countries experienced extreme political, economic and social transformations. A number of ethnic groups who attained their independence sought their cultural identity within their traditional local cultures. The rapid expansion of the market economy throughout the world and the outstanding progress of information and communication technology began to change the world into a uniform economic and cultural state. Under these circumstances, many UNESCO Member States started taking

⁵⁴⁸ Noriko Aikawa, at the time of the statement Director of the UNESCO Intangible Heritage Unit, refers to an unidentified expert quoted in Marc Denhez's (lawyer) 1997 pre-evaluation report.

⁵⁴⁹ 'Soft law' refers to norms produced by private companies and markets, or established in international relations, which are although are not necessarily enforced by courts or public authorities, ambiguously carries considerable and potential influence.

⁵⁵⁰ Due to the lack of response by the Member States, the Director-General did not submit the report to the General Conference which violated Article 17 of the Rules of Procedure concerning recommendations to the Member States and international conventions.

⁵⁵¹ CIOFF's activities included seminars (CIOFF Switzerland 1990; CIOFF Italy 1991; CIOFF Spain 1992), aimed at increasing awareness of the *Recommendation* within both the public and private sectors.

interest in their traditional popular cultures. They rediscovered their spiritual values and their role as symbolic reference to an identity rooted in the memory of local communities.

Due to the world's strengthened interest in preserving traditional popular cultures, the United Nations felt it was necessary to review and reorient its program regarding traditional popular cultures. In 1991, the UNESCO General Conference decided that the program entitled "Non –Physical Cultural Heritage" should be placed between the programs: "Enhancement of Cultural Identities" and "Physical Cultural Heritage" to highlight the dual nature of the program for non-physical cultural heritage (Aikawa 2001: 14). In 1992, UNESCO conducted an evaluation of all activities carried over the past two years in the field of traditional popular cultures. After the evaluation, the title of the program "Non-Physical Cultural Heritage" was modified in "Intangible Cultural Heritage" (Aikawa 2001: 14).

In June 1993, UNESCO organized an international conference to create new guidelines for the Intangible Cultural Heritage Program, with the financial support of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The "UNESCO/Japan Funds-In-Trust for the Safeguarding and Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" was established in the same year, providing a yearly financial contribution to the program. The 1993 guidelines, recognizing the urgency, asked that the "guardians and creators of intangible cultural heritage, as well as policy makers, administrators and the public should pay greater respect to their traditional and popular culture and should recognize the need for its preservation and transmission" (Aikawa 2001: 14).

The 1993 Guidelines further stressed the crucial role of the people and communities who produce or reproduce cultural forms and creative expressions at the

local level. In addition, the guidelines asked nations to recognize the priority of revitalizing these cultures by adapting them to the modern world. Thus, the selection of the aspects of culture to be adapted to the modern world should be chosen by the producers of the culture themselves. Besides encouraging nations to safeguard heritages threatened by extinction, the guidelines also included the following precautions to be taken in conceiving and implementing the program:

Not to crystallize the intangible cultural heritage, whose fundamental characteristic is to be permanently evolving; not to take this heritage out of its original context, as, for example, “folklorization” does; to be aware of the obstacles that threaten the survival of the intangible cultural heritage; to give greater emphasis to the intangible heritage of hybrid cultures, which develop in urban areas; and to employ a different methodology for intangible cultural heritage than for tangible cultural heritage.

The 1993 Guidelines, in conjunction to the *Reccomendation*, laid the foundations for the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategies for 1996-2001 in the field of Intangible Cultural Heritage.⁵⁵² In October 1993, UNESCO established the “Living Human Treasures” program.⁵⁵³ By defining “living human treasures” the program is aimed to ensure the development and protection of the people “who embody, who have in the very

⁵⁵² A number of regional ‘pilot’ projects in Vietnam, Hungary, Mexico and Niger endorsed by the International Consultation of 1993 were implemented.

⁵⁵³ The first Living Human Treasures System was created in Japan in 1950: the Government of Japan gave special recognition to bearers of the skills and techniques essential for the continuation of certain important intangible cultural properties. The Republic of Korea proposed to the 142nd session of the UNESCO Executive Board in 1993, the establishment of a UNESCO “Living Human Treasures” program aimed to find and officially recognize holders of intangible cultural heritage. In 1964 the Government of the Republic of Korea had introduced its own system to ensure the preservation and transmission to future generations of intangible cultural properties. Moreover, the Philippines specifically acknowledged a category of “National Artists” under a Presidential Decree of 1973, which granted them certain, privileges and honors. Another programme creating “Living National Treasures” (Gawad Manlilikha ng Bayan - GAMABA) followed in 1988 with the object of preserving indigenous traditions and transmitting them to younger generations. Thailand moved in a similar direction in 1985 when its “National Artists Project” was launched with the specific intention of paying tribute to highly gifted and dedicated Thai artists while, at the same time, preserving the arts involved.

highest degree, the skills and techniques necessary for the production of selected aspects of the cultural life of a people and the continued existence of their material cultural heritage.”⁵⁵⁴ In order to promote the establishment of the Living Human Treasures system worldwide, Guidelines for the system and its various aspects were written in 1996 and distributed to Member States. Resolution 23, adopted by the 29th session of the UNESCO General Conference in 1997, further implemented the project.

In April 1995, the “South Pacific Regional Consultation on Indigenous Peoples, Knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights”, was held in Suva, Fiji. The Final Statement issued by the Regional Consultation declared “the right of indigenous peoples of the Pacific to self governance and independence of our lands, territories and resources as the basis for the preservation of indigenous peoples’ knowledge” (Leistner 2004: 113). This Statement viewed western intellectual property rights as a means of exploiting indigenous peoples, inviting the UN to support discussions on indigenous peoples’ knowledge and intellectual property rights (Leistner *ibid.*).

By the end of the 1990s indigenous representatives were collaborating with WIPO and UNESCO. The “UNESCO-WIPO World Forum on the Protection of Folklore”, held in Phuket, Thailand in April 1997, discussed above, was followed by several initiatives from UNESCO Member States which paved the way for a series of assessments of the application of the *Recommendation*, a series of surveys, seminars were organized in different parts of then world.⁵⁵⁵ On the initiative of some Moroccan intellectuals and the

⁵⁵⁴ UNESCO Guidelines for the Establishment of a ‘Living Human Treasures’ System.

⁵⁵⁵ Czech Republic (1995), Mexico (1997), Japan (1998), Finland (1998), Uzbekistan (1998), Ghana (1999), New Caledonia (1999), Lebanon (1999). In November 1999 the UNESCO General Conference adopted a draft resolution presented by Hungary to create an interregional network of research institutions specializing in traditional popular cultures of Eastern and Central Europe in Budapest. The European Center for Traditional Culture (ECTC) was created with UNESCO’s

Spanish writer Juan Goytisolo, the Cultural Heritage Division and the Moroccan National Commission for UNESCO organized an International Consultation on the Preservation of Popular Cultural Spaces, which was held in Marrakesh in June 1997. “It was at that meeting that a new concept of cultural anthropology was defined: the oral heritage of humanity”.⁵⁵⁶ It was unanimously agreed that an international distinction should be created by UNESCO to draw attention to masterpieces of this form of heritage. Keeping the momentum of that International Consultation, the Moroccan authorities, supported by many Member States, submitted a draft resolution that was adopted by the General Conference at its 29th session.

Between 1998 and 1999, WIPO conducted nine “Fact-finding Missions” (FFMs) in 28 countries to identify the intellectual property related needs and expectations of traditional knowledge holders. For the purpose of these missions, ‘traditional knowledge’ included traditional cultural expressions as a sub-set.⁵⁵⁷ In 1999 the attention moved towards joint “UNESCO/WIPO Regional Consultations on the Protection of Expressions of Folklore”,⁵⁵⁸ one of which included the Asia-Pacific region in April 1999. The unanimous recommendation was that WIPO and UNESCO increase their work in the field of ‘folklore’, and the development of an international regime for the protection of

support to contribute to the wide distribution of the 1989 *Recommendation* in Eastern and Central Europe and to assemble a database on institutions specializing in European traditional popular cultures.

⁵⁵⁶ This statement can be read on the UNESCO website page “Historical Background” http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2227andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html

⁵⁵⁷ The results of the missions were published by WIPO in a report entitled “Intellectual Property Needs and Expectations of Traditional Knowledge Holders: WIPO Report on Fact-finding Missions (1998-1999)” (WIPO undated Booklet No.1 “Intellectual Property and Traditional Cultural Expressions/Folklore”, p.3).

⁵⁵⁸ The first consultation was held in Pretoria from 23 to 25 March 1999 with the assistance of the Government of South Africa.

expressions of folklore.⁵⁵⁹

In February 1999, the UNESCO/General Secretariat of the Pacific Community convened a “Symposium on the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Traditional and Popular Indigenous Cultures in the Pacific Islands” in Noumea. The Symposium brought together the representatives of 21 States and territories of the South Pacific region. It took stock of the different aspects of the protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of popular indigenous cultures in the Pacific Islands, and adopted a “Final Declaration”. In that occasion a definition—quite different from those seen above—was given to traditional knowledge and expressions of the indigenous cultures of the Pacific islands:

The ways in which indigenous cultures are expressed and which are manifestations of worldviews of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific. Traditional knowledge and cultural expressions are any knowledge or any expressions created, acquired and inspired (applied, inherent or abstract) for the physical and spiritual wellbeing of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific. The nature and use of this knowledge and expressions are transmitted from one generation to the next to enhance, safeguard and perpetuate the identity, wellbeing and rights of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific. This knowledge and these expressions include and are not limited to: spirituality, spiritual knowledge, ethics and moral values; social institutions (kinship, political, traditional justice; dances, ceremonies and ritual performances and practices; games and sports; music; language; names, stories, traditions, songs in oral narratives; land and sea and air; all sites of the cultural significance and immovable cultural property and their associated knowledge; cultural environmental resources; traditional resource management including traditional conservation measures; all material objects and moveable cultural property; all traditional knowledge and expressions of indigenous cultures held in *ex situ* collections; indigenous peoples ancestral remains, human genetic materials; scientific, agricultural, technical and ecological knowledge, and the skills required to implement this knowledge (including that pertaining to resource use practices and systems of classification); the delineated forms, parts and

⁵⁵⁹ (WIPO undated Booklet No.1 “Intellectual Property and Traditional Cultural Expressions/Folklore”, p.4).

details of visual compositions (designs); permanently documented aspects of traditional indigenous cultures in all forms (including scientific and ethnographic research reports, papers and books, photographs and digital images, films and sound recordings).

In the same year, as a culmination of the *Recommendations* evaluative seminars, UNESCO in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, organized an international conference in Washington in June 1999, entitled: "A Global Assessment of the 1989 Recommendations: Local Empowerment and International Co-operation". This conference analyzed the situation of the safeguarding and revitalization of intangible cultural heritage and worked out strategic actions to evaluate and adjust the *Recommendations*' aim. "The conference found the UNESCO *Recommendation* to be somewhat ill-construed, 'top-down', state oriented, 'soft' international instrument that defined traditional culture in essentialist, tangible, archival terms, and had little impact around the globe upon cultural communities and practitioners. The conference and a subsequently published book *Safeguarding Traditional Cultures* called for a more dynamic view of cultural traditions as 'living' and enacted by communities." (Kurin 2004: 68).

In November 1999, the UNESCO Executive Board decided to create an international distinction entitled "Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity" to honor the most impressive examples of oral and intangible heritage. The *Proclamation*'s main objectives are to encourage governments, non-governmental organizations, and local communities "to identify, safeguard, revitalize,

and promote their oral and intangible cultural heritage”.⁵⁶⁰ On May 18, 2001, the first UNESCO Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity took place in Paris, a separate program from the long established World Heritage List. The ‘masterpieces’ are extremely varied, covering all sorts of sociocultural phenomena ranging from theater and music to folklore and traditional royal and popular rituals (Nas 2002: 139).

A fundamental step was taken in the Fall 2000 at the 25th Session of WIPO’s General Assembly, establishing an “Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore” (ICG). The first meeting of the ICG took place in April and December 2001, and in June 2002 in Geneva among Member States of WIPO as well as numerous international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Paragraph 3.3 of the First Session, states that “IPRs [intellectual property rights] do not recognize the traditional knowledge systems, traditional knowledge and innovations of Local Communities and Indigenous People. Therefore the implementation of IPRs is in direct conflict with traditional practices and lifestyles of Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples. As they stand now, IPRs regimes do not recognize, protect and reward traditional knowledge systems, traditional knowledge and innovations.”⁵⁶¹

Before the 61st UNESCO Plenary Meeting of November 2001, which proclaimed

⁵⁶⁰ This is relevant for the definition of cultural heritage has recently evolved to include more categories. More recently the new proclamation program has reinforced strategic objectives in its culture mandate: promoting the preparation and implementation of standard-setting instruments in the field of culture; protecting cultural diversity and encouraging pluralism and dialogue between cultures and civilizations; enhancing the links between culture and development through capacity-building and sharing of knowledge.

http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2227andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html

⁵⁶¹ WIPO/GRTKF/IC/1/12 (May 3, 2001).

2002 as the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage,⁵⁶² to raise public awareness regarding the issue of cultural heritage such as intangible heritage,⁵⁶³ a preliminary study on the possibility of drafting a new regulatory instrument for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage was commissioned and examined at a series of international meeting of experts organized by UNESCO in Turin, Italy, in March 2001, and in Rio de Janeiro in early 2002. A first Preliminary Draft of an International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was issued on the 26 July 2002. It is divided in various headings, such as General Provisions concerning the definition of the intangible cultural heritage and the obligations of the States to safeguard it, the establishment of an Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee within UNESCO and of an Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund⁵⁶⁴.

In the same year, in India, the government inaugurated an electronic database that provides comprehensive inventories of traditional healing methods and plant medicines. An example of ‘defensive publishing’, the database is intended to make it more difficult for researchers from the western world to register patent claims that exploit traditional Indian knowledge (Brown 2003a: 2).

The chimera of the adoption of an international legal instrument—yet showing the earmark of ‘soft law’—started becoming a reality. On 17 October 2003, the 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage,⁵⁶⁵ the fifth of its kind in envisioning and providing

⁵⁶² The year 2002 marked the 30th anniversary of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (The World Heritage Convention).

⁵⁶³ UNESCO 2001: A/RES/56/8.

⁵⁶⁴ A trust fund, in conformity with the provisions of the Financial Regulations of UNESCO.

⁵⁶⁵ Paving the way to future ratifications, the Convention was signed in six languages on November 3, 2003 by Director-General of UNESCO Koïchiro Matsuura and the President of the

protection for cultural heritage.⁵⁶⁶

Intangible Heritage, Tangible Inventories, Visible Debates: The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Can UNESCO, the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, help local cultural traditions around the world survive and even flourish in the face of globalization? No one really knows, but with a new International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage it may be better equipped to do so. At the biennial meeting of its General Conference in Paris on 17 October 2003 some 120 member nations voted for the multilateral treaty. No one voted against it; only a handful of nations abstained—Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Switzerland, and the United States among them. For the convention to now become international law it needs to be ratified by 30 states parties.⁵⁶⁷ (Kurin 2004)⁵⁶⁸

Rieks Smeets, the Chief of the Intangible Heritage Section of UNESCO, in a keynote speech given at the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), in

General Conference, Michael Omolewa in the presence of members of the Jury for the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The interconnection among the Convention and the Proclamation was further stressed on November 4, when Matsuura highlighted the importance of “the fact that the second Proclamation coincides with the adoption of the Convention... [which] marks the end of a process that has taken UNESCO through twenty years of pioneering action to the beginning of a new era.”

⁵⁶⁶ For completeness of this historical analysis, on the UNESCO’s website it is argued that UNESCO, “As the guardian of cultural heritage” seeks to extend that concept by promoting the oral and intangible heritage, in a geographically balanced way, and that for the last 20 years, UNESCO has been at the forefront of oral and intangible heritage preservation with an international instrument, programmes and publications including:

- Collection of Traditional Music of the World;
- Handbook for the Collection of Traditional Music and Musical Instruments;
- Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger of Disappearing;
- Intergovernmental Conference on African Language Policies.

[http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2227andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html)

[URL_ID=2227andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2227andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html)

⁵⁶⁷ By August 2006, Sixty States have already ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2309andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html)

[URL_ID=2309andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2309andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html)

⁵⁶⁸ Abstract from *Museum International* (UNESCO) 221-222, May 2004

[http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=21739andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html#safeguarding)

[URL_ID=21739andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html#safeguarding](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=21739andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html#safeguarding)

occasion of the 2003 Regional Meeting in Asia and the Pacific on Promotion of Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Osaka, Japan, opened his speech saying that although the discussion on the protection of intangible heritage started decades ago, the preparation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage itself did not take much time, no more than two very dense years of activities, in all 30,000 hours invested in this enterprise by experts, delegations and his division (Smeets 2004: 39). Smeets reports that the experts spent a long time on the ‘definition’ of intangible cultural heritage, while acknowledging that this definition is to remain “work in progress” (Smeets 2004: 42). Article 2(1) of the Convention presents us with a broad definition.⁵⁶⁹

The ‘intangible cultural heritage’ means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.

Article 2(2), enumerates in a “non-exhaustive manner” (Smeets 2004: 42) a number of domains in which the intangible heritage is manifested *inter alia*:

⁵⁶⁹ This definition differs from the one circulated in the Guidelines for the Establishment of Living Human Treasures Systems (updated version 2002), system which is currently embedded in the Convention 2003: “The most up-to-date definition of intangible cultural heritage is: ‘people’s learned processes along with the knowledge, skills, and creativity that inform and are developed by them, the products they create, and resources, spaces and other aspects of social and natural context necessary to their sustainability; these processes provide living communities with a sense of continuity with previous generations and are important to cultural identity, as well as to safeguarding of cultural diversity and creativity of humanity.’ ”

- (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- (b) performing arts;
- (c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
- (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- (e) traditional craftsmanship.

Recalling the discussion on the “African Position Paper”, I am sympathetic with Smeets that the relation between tangible and intangible heritage is a hot topic on various national and transnational agendas. Smeets in his speech declared that there is no difference between the two (Smeets 204: 44). It is true that there are items of the intangible cultural heritage that are dependent on the existence of specific cultural spaces⁵⁷⁰. However, I argue that while some aspects of the intangible heritage are deeply influenced by the tastes and quest of authenticity of cultural tourism (see Chapter 5), cultural tourism’s role in the contamination and crumbling of native cultures is *less* evident in their tangible form and enunciation, like the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras, the Medina of Tunis, or the Pantanal Conservation Area of Brazil.

Tangible cultural heritage is relatively easier to catalogue, conserve, or restore. Intangible cultural heritage on the other hand appears more ‘fragile’, more vulnerable than other forms of heritage, because it hinges on actors and social-environmental conditions that are subject of capricious, unforeseeable changes. Furthermore, while the tangible cultural heritage is designed to outlive those who produce it, the fate of the intangible one is far more intimately related to its creators.

This new convention calls for Member States to take measures in ensuring the

⁵⁷⁰ The Shanghai Charter, adopted at the 7th Asia Pacific Regional Assembly of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Shanghai in October 2002, recommends that museums “establish interdisciplinary and cross-sectorial approaches that bring together movable and immovable, tangible and intangible, natural and cultural heritage” and “develop documentation tools and standards in establishing holistic museum and heritage practices.” (in Bouchenaki 2004: 8).

preservation of international cultural heritage and strengthen cooperation and solidarity between the international and regional levels. In the end, this convention encourages states to share information and resources with each other to protect intangible cultural heritage. There are three significant points to discuss. First, the convention provides for the Member States to create national inventories of intangible cultural heritage. Second, the convention establishes an Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage composed of representatives from Member States. Third, the newly established committee will draw up two lists called the Representative List of the International Cultural Heritage of Humanity and the List of International Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. The first of these lists will eventually include the items from the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Chapter III, Article 12.1 – Inventories states:

To ensure identification with a view to safeguarding, each State Party shall draw up, in a manner geared to its own situation, one or more inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory. These inventories shall be regularly updated.

This article is supported by the Article 11(b) – Roles of the State Parties:

Among the safeguarding measures referred to in Article 2, paragraph 3, identify and define the various elements of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory, with the participation of communities, groups, and relevant non-governmental organizations.

Inventory-making is seen as one of the crucial issues to study and develop possible theories and methodologies for inventory-making of Intangible Cultural Heritage in countries on the basis of varying factors depending on historical and social conditions

of cultures. Although the Convention is trying not to make the same faux pas of standardizing or universal approaches as in the 1989 *Recommendation*,⁵⁷¹ whose measures (identification, conservation, preservation, dissemination, protection and international cooperation) are clearly inspired by the Article 4 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention,⁵⁷² it is still showing 19th century strategies inspired by the brothers Grimm (who collected folk stories of German peasants). The choice of a decentralized approach is actually better expressed in Article 19.1: "...international cooperation includes, inter alia, the exchange of information and experience, joint initiatives..."⁵⁷³

If the major obstacle of having national archives of intangible cultural heritage was initially seen in the vast volume of intangible cultural heritage that must be identified, collected and recorded, in December 2004 The Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)⁵⁷⁴ hosted the first "Workshop on Inventory-making for Intangible

⁵⁷¹ 'B'. "Folklore, as a form of cultural expression, must be safeguarded by and for the group (familial, occupational, national, regional, religious, ethnic, etc.) whose identity it expresses. To this end, Member States should encourage appropriate survey research on national, regional and international levels with the aim to:

- (a) develop a national inventory of institutions concerned with folklore with a view to its inclusion in regional and global registers of folklore institutions;
- (b) create identification and recording systems (collection, cataloguing, transcription) or develop those that already exist by way of handbooks, collecting guides, model catalogues, etc., in view of the need to co-ordinate the classification systems used by different institutions;
- (c) stimulate the creation of a standard typology of folklore by way of:
 - (i) a general outline of folklore for global use;
 - (ii) a comprehensive register of folklore; and
 - (iii) regional classifications of folklore, especially fieldwork pilot projects.

⁵⁷² Art. 4: "Each State Party to this Convention recognizes that the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 and situated on its territory, belongs primarily to that State..."

⁵⁷³ During my meetings at UNESCO in Paris in October 2005, I was being informed that UNESCO is currently preparing several handbooks designed to help Member States to safeguard their intangible cultural heritage, which reinforces the concept of applying centralized general guidelines.

⁵⁷⁴ Japan has been one of the most committed partners of UNESCO in all its mandatory fields of

Cultural Heritage Management” in the region, attended among others by Fiji representative for its National Inventory Project, Sipiriano Nemani.

In that occasion Ms. Noriko Aikawa,⁵⁷⁵ Advisor for the Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO, disclosed the major challenges for States Parties in implementing the Article 12 of the 2003 Convention, reflected by the underpinning principles of the Convention, which can be briefly summarized in the following points: fostering of cultural identity and cultural diversity; respecting international human rights instruments; ensuring the participation of communities, groups of practitioners, creators and artists of the concerned heritage and relevant non-governmental organizations (Art. 11(b), Art. 15); respecting the non-static characteristics (recreated permanently) of this heritage; adopting a flexible and decentralizing approach for the identification of intangible cultural heritage at national level bearing in mind the specificity of different cultures (Art. 11(b), Art. 12.1); respecting equity approach, avoiding creation of ‘hierarchy’ among different expressions of intangible cultural heritage;⁵⁷⁶ Guaranteeing accessibility (Art. 13(d)-ii, and iii) to the intangible cultural heritage as well to its documentation except for those which are kept secret according to the customary practices of the practitioners community (Aikawa 2004: 44).

action ever since it joined the Organization in 1951. The Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) is a non-profit Japanese organization for Asia and the Pacific regional activities in line with the principles of UNESCO, working for the promotion of mutual understanding and cultural cooperation among peoples in the region. ACCU was established in April 1971 in Tokyo through joint efforts of both public and private sectors in Japan. ACCU has since been implementing various regional cooperative programmes in the fields of culture, education and personnel exchange in close collaboration with UNESCO and its Member States in Asia and the Pacific. In 1979 Pacific Countries joined in ACCU activities. In 1993 ACCU was renamed to Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO.

⁵⁷⁵ Former Director of the UNESCO Intangible Heritage Unit, and Professor of International Studies at Kanda University.

⁵⁷⁶ This is why in the Convention there is no more mention of the “outstanding universal value” as contained in the Art. 1, Art. 2 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention.

Several priority-strategies emerged from the ACCU 2004 Workshop are worth mentioning for they can be juxtaposed to my experience as a ‘circumstantial volunteer’ observing their reflection into Fiji’s milieu: define the selection criteria for the entry in the inventories; set up technical methods suitable for the drawing up of the inventories; create legal, administrative and financial mechanisms to develop and implement the inventories; set up the training facilities and guidelines for the inventory making agents; create and assessment-updating mechanism of established inventories; ensure the intellectual property protection of the contents of the inventories.

Despite the undoubted good intentions of the ACCU Workshop, in a recent report it appears that they have run into the same problem of standardizing, universal approaches as in the 1989 infamous *Recommendation*, stating that “the initial objective [of the workshop] was to share the situation of national/local ICH inventories in participating countries, identify the challenges involved, and to establish some model steps for inventory-making which could be adopted universally”,⁵⁷⁷ which culminated in “ ‘Recommended Approaches to Inventory-making and Some Examples of Inventory-Making Programmes and Methodologies’ which should serve as a good foundation for future programmes in the field.”⁵⁷⁸

Kurin offers mixed comments to these strategies. In Spring 2003 he appears more caustic asking bluntly: “Are inventories, lists, and registries of traditions the best way to ‘safeguard’ them?” (Kurin 2003a). Kurin shows deep concerns about the fact that the 2003 Convention could create new legal categories for nations, such as ‘cultural

⁵⁷⁷ Report on ACCU Regional Programmes on Intangible Cultural Heritage in FY2004 (April 2004 to March 2005), p. 1.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

communities', or it might invest in people and groups new legal rights, conflicting with other international accords. Furthermore, the Convention could not show consistency with prior agreements, especially those developed by WIPO and the newly launched Cultural Diversity one—passed not without inevitable debates and disagreements—at the time I was in Paris on October 2005.

In this context, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage represents, using Brown's (2003b) words, an 'opening salvo' in a concerted campaign to protect cultural diversity by allowing states to restrict the exportation of local knowledge and the importation of cultural items perceived to pose a threat to national values and traditions.⁵⁷⁹

Richard Kurin (2003b) admits that safeguarding traditional cultures or intangible cultural heritage is a good and reasonable idea, but developing a legally binding appropriate international instrument that would actually accomplish such a goal is an incredibly difficult challenge. Like Twarog (2004), Kurin believes that the new

⁵⁷⁹ The adoption of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the re-election of Koïchiro Matsuura as Director-General of UNESCO marked the 33rd session of UNESCO's General Conference, which closed October 21, 2005. The major European newspapers gave particular emphasis to the fact that after more than three years of cantankerous debates, UNESCO adopted an international treaty to protect cultural diversity, marking what some say is a first but important moral victory in the long-running fight to preserve the world's cultural richness. It was immediately labeled as anti-American, for the treaty is seen as a triumph for developing European and non-European countries in the struggle to preserve their unique cultural identities from domination by the so-called 'entertainment industry' à la Hollywood. 148 countries approved the convention, two, Israel and the United States voted against it. Brown observes that as the world's biggest exporter of copyright media products, United States' opposition did not come as surprise (see Brown 2003b: 2). Its objectives include: "Recognizing the importance of traditional knowledge as a source of intangible and material wealth, and in particular knowledge systems of indigenous peoples, and its positive contribution to sustainable development, as well as the need for its adequate protection and promotion... Recognizing that the diversity of cultural expressions, including traditional cultural expressions, is an important factor that allows individuals and peoples to express and to share with others ideas and values... Recognizing the importance of intellectual property rights in sustaining those involved in cultural creativity".

generations' desires, the changes due to modernization and the onslaught of global mass culture raise the question of whether valuable traditions, practices and forms of knowledge will survive the next generation, or even the next decade (Kurin 2003a: 1).

More specifically, Lyndel Prott, Chief International Standards UNESCO Division of Cultural Heritage, argues that current anthropological studies emphasize that it is the social process that needs to be preserved, rather than merely the items produced, to ensure the continued creation of these valued products (Prott 2001). However, he recognizes that this social process is currently interfered with by *other* social processes, like globalization, tourism, commodification, and that culture is produced by diverse social processes. The revolution created by global television and Internet communication provides powerful images and values that counter those inherited in many societies. Thus, he believes that there is place for legal regulation, but too much should not be expected of it. Law should be used as one of a number of social controls, such as education, while using incentive schemes to work with existing elements of the social processes of the communities concerned, 'empowering' those persons who are bearers of traditional culture to continue to provide alternative models of behavior and different criteria of 'success' to the new generations than those portrayed by other means entering the community from outside (Prott *ibid.*).

In December 2003, in the middle of the debate with Brown,⁵⁸⁰ Kurin unveiled a plausible strategy: that completing this convention could represent a work in progress for the policy makers and scholars a *sine qua non* for moving on toward a more 'contentious' one concerning culture and world trade. More recently, he added that for the culture

⁵⁸⁰ See Cultural Commons <http://www.culturalcommons.org/comment-print.cfm?ID=12> and Cultural Commons <http://www.culturalcommons.org/kurin.htm>

bearers and stakeholders the Convention “is a welcome addition to the tool-kit of resources available for accomplishing valuable cultural work” (Kurin 2004: 76).

Brown on the other hand, argues that treaties, declarations, UNESCO programs envisioned by the Convention are somewhat artificial, deprived of the spontaneous creativity that gave it meaning in the first place. They represent the rationalization of cultural processes by scholars, cultural workers, bureaucrats and diplomats, missing the spirit of a culture, with the unintended consequence of destroying rather than preserving cultural traditions (Brown 2003b: 2).

Kurin replied that there is no ‘natural’ cultural situation any more than there is an ‘artificial’ (Kurin 2003b: 2). In other words, Kurin argues that the natural condition of culture is not a people isolated doing their own thing, unaffected by the rest of the world and oblivious to it. After Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983), Kurin sees that much of what many cultural communities today take as ‘traditional’, is actually the result of actions, policies and interactions with global, regional and other forces distant from their daily lives.

As in the case of the Sawau tribe’s *vilavilavevo* practice, local cultures today represent not only practices and innovations inherited from a chain of ancestors, but also adaptations of and reactions to those from far away (Kurin 2003b: 2; *inter alia* Boorstin 1964; Graburn 1976, 1984; Rajotte 1978; Crocombe 1978; Silver 1979; Cohen 1982, 1983, 1988; Jules-Rosette 1984; Appadurai 1986; Bruner 1991; Van Den Berghe 1995; de Burlo 1996; Barker, 1998; Picard 1990; Lindberg & Johnson 1997; Silverman 1999; Fillitz 2002; Chaabra 2005). Drawing on Kurin’s comment (2003b), and the arguments of that informed the two previous chapters, in Beqa I have seen that all sort of forces affect

indigenous cultural practices and their TKEC today: consumption and consumerism, satellite TV, regional conflicts, tourism, Christianity and ‘new’ forms of worship.

Moreover, recalling some of the discussions that informed Chapter 5, the emergence of a tourist market frequently facilitates the preservation of a cultural tradition and enables its producers to maintain a meaningful local or ethnic identity which they might otherwise lose. Despite the changed context, the indigenous community may perceive an often astonishing degree of continuity between the old and the new situation (see Cohen 1988). Indigenous people frequently interpret novel situations in traditional terms, interpreting the very presence of tourists as a sign of the authenticity and continuity of their culture, thus perceiving a continuity of cultural meaning which may escape the tourist-observer (see Smith 1989; Picard 1990; Errington and Gewertz 1989).

Fiji’s Tangible Shift: *Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki*⁵⁸¹

In the first page of the ‘National Inventory on Traditional Fijian Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Project 2004 Report’, issued by the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture), point 2.1 reads that “Fiji is committed to the protection and enhancement of the social and cultural values of the

⁵⁸¹ “The National Inventory on Traditional Fijian Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Project” is a national initiative undertaken in all 14 provinces of Fiji, 200 districts and 1500 villages that encompass Fiji, including the custodians of traditional knowledge who reside in urban areas. Data gathered from the field will be first assessed at a local level at the provincial administration centers before submission to the main coordinating center, the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture) in Suva. The Duration is three years, 2005 to 2007. From April 2004 to April 2005 the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* organized training workshops for stakeholders, organized and send recruited personnel to assigned localities to undertake the research, created a software application for database system to be used to input data (traditional knowledge and expressions of culture) collected from the field. By January 2008 the project is expected to be completed and the registry for traditional knowledge and expressions of culture established. In depth analysis of collected data will continue till 2009. The estimated cost of the entire project in May 2005 was of FJD\$627,565.40 (ca. USD 412.000).

indigenous community. This commitment derives from the recognition of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions as a means of self-expressions, social identity and a living and ever-developing tradition, rather than just a memory of the past.”

Considering that only a handful of Pacific Island nations responded promptly to the recommendations of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage,⁵⁸² it was quite a surprise for me when on November 10, 2004 Mere Ratunabuabua walked me into the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture), to meet Sipiriano Nemani, who introduced himself as a National Inventory Project Administrative Officer. Nemani explained to me that Fiji’s National Inventory Project is a relatively new initiative. Its initial idea was ventilated in 2003 when the need arose to set up a formal structure to effectively police the “Model Law on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture” (‘Pacific Model Law’), derived from the *Regional Framework for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture* (Noumea 2002) discussed in the next chapter. Fiji’s adoption of the Pacific Model Law required the consideration of options and mechanisms for its proper implementation.

In Fiji’s view, the adoption of this model legislation requires the consideration of options and mechanisms for its proper implementation, hence the choice for the documentation of the vast aspects of Fijian Culture and its traditional holders, in a database-inventory format, which appears as a necessity for the formulation of the legislation.⁵⁸³ In my subsequent meetings with Nemani, Ratunabuabua, the Director of

⁵⁸² Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu.

⁵⁸³ National Inventory on Traditional Fijian Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Project 2004 Report, p. 4.

the Department of Culture and Heritage, Peni Cavuilagi, the Director of the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture), Misiwaini Qereqeretabua, Rupeni Nawaqakuta, the lawyer and First Parliamentary Counsel in charge of the Pacific Model Law revisions, Nanise Nagusuca, Assistant Minister for Culture and Heritage,⁵⁸⁴ and various field officers, it appeared that prior to any formalization of the Pacific Model Law, the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage was organizing rigorous consultations between stakeholders institutions that represent the Fijian indigenous community to facilitate the delineation of a framework to successfully execute the project.

An ‘Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights Committee’ formed by the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage was appointed to undertake the necessary preparatory work required to effectively build the documentation of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture and facilitate the policing and proper implementation of the Pacific Model Law. The Committee comprised officials from the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture), Department of Culture and Heritage, the Fijian Affairs Board and just recently the Native Lands and Fisheries Commission (NLFC).

Paragraph 5.2.3 “Nature and Objectives of National Inventory” of the training manual for the “May 2005 Training Workshop on Field Research Methodology Designed for Cultural Mapping Field Officers” specifies that:

Designated in Fijian as *na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena*

⁵⁸⁴ Nanise Nagusuca, was a member of the deposed government of former Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase. Her portfolio was appointed on December 16, 2004. The portfolio was recently removed after the coup of December 5, 2006.

matanataki, the national inventory project envisages the diverse traditional knowledge and cultural expressions that explicitly exists within the culture of the *itaukei* (native Fijians). For the 14 provinces that compose Fiji, each has its own distinct local knowledge and cultural system, which characterize their uniqueness. However, with globalization and rapid development in information technology, traditional expressions in Fiji are continually being exploited for commercial purposes, and on the verge of being replaced completely by a massive culture of modernism. Hence, the inventory is/was established with the following issues in mind: (i) the preservation and safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage; (ii) the promotion of cultural diversity; (iii) the respect for cultural rights; and (iv) the promotion of tradition-based creativity and innovation as ingredients of sustainable economic development.

The National Inventory Project is envisaged to be beneficial economically, socially and education wise. Having a database with through entries of existing holders of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture (tangible and intangible heritage) will ensure that its owners are properly recognized, identified for the non-commercial use of their knowledge and cultural expressions, and that they are compensated accordingly for the commercial use of their cultural expressions. Moreover, the creation of such framework will encourage tradition-based innovation and creativity for the custodians. It will also ensure the preservation of know-how, skills, practices, and techniques that are pivotal foundations for indigenous Fijians as a group of people with a specific cultural identity, as a community, and as an ethnic group. Furthermore, the identification and documentation of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture will ensure that it is properly transmitted, revitalized, and promoted to ensure its maintenance and viability. This will be achieved through the education and training of young people to learn, use and transmit the know-how. Such a plan will assist government stakeholders in the formulation of strategies for cultural development in Fiji's education curriculum.

An example of the role of tradition in Fiji's education curriculum is offered by my interviews at village and government level about the position of indigenous Fijian traditional knowledge, wisdom and legends in school education. Rika Tuipulotu, Senior Education Officer for the Social Sciences (Ministry of Education, Primary School curriculum) told me that "the *vilavilairevo* legend hasn't been dropped yet [from the curriculum], actually it might never be" According to her, it is still in the 'teachers'

guidelines’ for class 4, with a note in the Fijian legends for class 2, and 8.⁵⁸⁵ In the “Social Studies” Handbook for Classes 1 and 2 we can find some ‘themes’: “the neighbourhood, people who help us, good behaviour, people of their lands, and legends of people who live in Fiji.”⁵⁸⁶

For the topic dedicated to a legend, the Handbook proposes “The owls and the chicken” (Rotuman legend), as an alternative with “Why the cocks crow when the tide is rising”,⁵⁸⁷ although it is specified that is entirely up to the teacher to choose the topic they would like to discuss, mainly using the governmental Pupil’s Books as a reference. The point is that the ‘legend of Beqa’s firewalkers’ is *not* available in any of the Pupil’s Books I checked at the Government Bookshop across from Suva’s market. However, a multitude of gaily-colored versions of the legend are available on line, or at Nadi’s International Airport in form of tourists’ brochures—not counting the hotels’ ‘own’ variants of the myth recited by the hotels’ MCs for the amusement of the guests at the evening shows.

Moreover, I realized that even at the Sawau District School in Dakuibeqa, Beqa, the ‘home of the firewalkers’, their own famous legend is neglected—although not unappreciated, as emerged from my interviews with Salanieta Davutu, a senior teacher at the Sawau District School and a descendant of a lineage of *bete* (traditional priests of firewalking).

⁵⁸⁵ In Fiji, class 2 pupils are about seven years old, in Class 4, nine, and in Class 8 (or Form 2), thirteen. Primary education lasts for a maximum of eight years. Pupils enter junior secondary school after the sixth year of primary school and the passing of the Fiji intermediate Examination. Fiji’s school system is still based on the New Zealand curriculum—which until 1989 allowed students to sit for New Zealand high school exams—now replaced by a Fiji School Certificate System maintaining classes in English language. According to a JICA-Fiji 2005 pamphlet, Fiji has a high literacy rate (87% of the people can read) and almost 100% attend Primary School.

⁵⁸⁶ Social Studies Handbook for Classes 1 and 2, Ministry of Education, Fiji, p. 5.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

Legends and tales are one of the items on the long list of elements of Fijian traditional knowledge and expressions of culture encompassed by Fiji's National Inventory. While for a full list I defer to the table reproduced in Appendix I,⁵⁸⁸ an overview is relevant to the discourse and shows how Fiji is interpreting and positioning the recommendations and outlines imposed to the State Member by the 2003 UNESCO Convention and the Pacific Model Law. All the 'items' are accompanied by a brief description. The first item is "Kinship" whose documentation involves genealogical / kinship information, including totems, rank, and number of extended families, clans, tribes etc. It is followed by "Heritage Sites", which covers sites of historical and cultural significance to a clan, tribe, village or province. The third voice on the list announces also "Emigrational Information" including movements of ancestral Fijians from a particular settlement to the next, due to war, a form of reparation in the aftermath of a battle or sickness. Also "Traditional forms of award for bravery during war", comprising the assignment of a piece of land, honorific titles (e.g., *koroi*).⁵⁸⁹

The list continues with traditional ceremonies, ritual, practices, beliefs, religious practices, intended as "forms of ritualistic behavior prior to the coming of Christianity into Fiji".⁵⁹⁰ An interesting addition to the documentation regards the "Published and unpublished material". The description is not fully clear, but it seems that this section would embrace 'any' previous research regarding traditional knowledge or expressions of culture associated to a village, clan, tribe, district or a province. The purpose of this

⁵⁸⁸ The list is taken from the Training Manual for the "May 2005 Training Workshop on Field Research Methodology Designed for Cultural Mapping Field Officers" at 5.2.4.

⁵⁸⁹ A name of honor given to a person who has killed someone in war, in modern usage it refers to the conferring of decorations (ceremony of *Veibuli koroi*) (Capell 1941).

⁵⁹⁰ Training Manual for the "May 2005 Training Workshop on Field Research Methodology Designed for Cultural Mapping Field Officers", p. 19.

section is to “record issues that had been recorded by researchers”,⁵⁹¹ which would allow a collaborative agenda between native and non-native researchers.

This point may find a confirmation in the fact that my ethnographic material (audio, video and transcripts) collected in Beqa during my fieldwork was zestfully accepted by the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture),⁵⁹² and a grant was allocated for the multimedia documentation called *The Sawau Project* discussed in Chapter 8. The list covers also all Fiji’s dialects, traditional names, traditional medicine, traditional healing practices, traditional fishing methods, traditional agriculture, traditional crafts and designs, and traditional forms of performing art, covering from forms of *meke* (traditional dance) to traditional games, traditional sailing, food preparation, costumes, rites of passage, and tales and legends.

In this study I have already expressed the skepticism that registers, *Tukutuku Raraba*, and other colonial census provoke. I already said that things are of a different nature today. It is incontestable that the *Mabo*⁵⁹³ decision has persuasively conflated land issues with expressions of culture. However, we cannot compare the *Tukutuku Raraba*, the oral histories of Fijian groups recorded by the Native Land Commission while in the process of establishing a register of land holders’ rights, titles and customs, to the *Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki* (National Inventory on Traditional Fijian Knowledge and Expressions of Culture). It is not a secret in Fiji that the *Tukutuku Raraba* were not always spontaneous accounts, although they contain very useful and sensitive information not available to the public. In several situations in fact, the village

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

⁵⁹² See Appendix A.

⁵⁹³ As previously discussed, the decision reversed prior thinking which assumed that lands were unoccupied and therefore under the power of the Crown except in cases where the native population could establish traditional ownership.

elders I interviewed were complaining about their accurateness (Chapter 3). On the other hand, one of the worries remains that in the same way, cultural heritage that is inventoried, declared an official treasure, surveilled by government oversight committees could loose much of its spontaneous creativity (see Brown 2003b: 2).

However, Fijian clans, tribes, villages, do not have to ‘mould’ their traditional cultural expressions to a set structure. Their claims will be always considered and listened to the Cultural Authority.⁵⁹⁴ The documentation process appears an unfolding, dynamic, open-ended process compared to the limitations and blocks imposed by the colonial government.⁵⁹⁵ The methodologies adopted by the National Inventory on Traditional Fijian Knowledge and Expressions of Culture do not have any coercive nature. After all, the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture) represents the ennobling hand of the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga* (the Great Council of Chiefs), whose main aim is to encourage, facilitate and study the development of Fijian language and culture.

The project’s rationale comes from an array of concerns. Fear of globalization and

⁵⁹⁴ Part 5 of the Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill 2005 (5th Draft, September 2005), establishes the Cultural Authority of Fiji. Art. 34(1) provides that the Cultural Authority of Fiji consisting of : (a) a chairperson and; (b) 4 other members, appointed by the Minister. The members may be appointed for a term of up to 3 years and are eligible for re-appointment (Art.34(2)), and may meet at least four times a year (Art. 34(4)). The functions of the Cultural Authority are: to receive and process applications (Art. 35(a)); to monitor compliance with authorised user agreements and to advise traditional owners of any breaches of such agreements (Art. 35(b)); to develop standard terms and conditions for authorised user agreements (Art. 35(c)); to provide training and education programs for traditional owners and users of traditional knowledge or expressions of culture (Art. 35(d)); to develop a Code of Ethics in relation to use of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture (Art. 35(e)); to issue advisory guidelines for the purposes of this Act (Art. 35(f)); to liaise with regional bodies in relation to matters under this Act (Art. 35(g)); to maintain a record of traditional owners or knowledge and expressions of culture (Art. 35(h)); if requested to do so to provide guidance on the meaning of customary use in specific cases (Art. 35(i)); such other functions as are conferred on it by this Act or any other written law (Art. 35(j)).

⁵⁹⁵ See the ‘Maxwell Pyramid’ (Chapter 2).

‘culture of uniformity’; rapid developments in information technology eradicating traditional culture; challenges of multiculturalism; loss of important aspect of Fijian culture, without any chance of being revitalized with the decease of key custodians; rise in rural-urban migration and emigration among indigenous youths; rise in unemployment among young indigenous men and women; over-commercialization of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture; no recognition and acknowledgement financial and non-financial of the contribution of the indigenous population to innovations, new creations and research activities; efforts to include the study of Fijian culture in the education curriculum.⁵⁹⁶

In response to these concerns, the objectives of the National Inventory Project emerging from the May 2005 Training Workshop organized by the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture), are: to raise public awareness and appreciation of the need to protect and promote the rights of Fijians to their cultural expressions as exclusive owners of traditional knowledge; to establish a Cultural Authority to cater to the new law and other functions associated with the use and protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture; to endorse the implementation of the Pacific Model Law to ensure the protection and preservation of Fijian culture from increased commercial exploitation and globalization; to provide support to custodians of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture in terms to play a ‘central role’ in the protection of their cultural heritage; to create employment opportunities for the custodians and their descendants, especially the younger generation, and to empower them to take the initiative to protect and promote rights to their cultural

⁵⁹⁶ Summary of point 2.0, 2.1 of the “Project Documentation Template: 2005-2007 Public Sector Investment Programme”.

expressions as exclusive owners of traditional knowledge; to build ‘links’ between custodians and the younger generation in order to encourage the transmission of knowledge and know-how related cultural expressions in danger of disappearing; to establish a ‘network of custodians’ of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture to serve as a basis for identifying and surveying and utilizing them in the systematic transmission of their skills and knowledge to the younger generation.

One more issue emerging from the May 2005 workshops and meetings, was that Fiji’s government also outlined the possibility of the re-utilization of aspects of the Fijian administration that have remain dormant such as the Fijian Court system which would act as a guide and facilitator for the socio-cultural and economic development of Fijians.⁵⁹⁷ A return to the past to protect the future seems the leitmotif in Fiji’s agenda, and is the key to the success of this project, where sites of resistance to globalization—inserted between local knowledge and national politics—are combined with regional and transnational hegemonic homogeneous forces.

In other words, it seems that the National Inventory Project necessitates the support of the Great Council of Chiefs, the Fijian Affairs Board and the awareness of the

⁵⁹⁷ Fiji’s government is currently supporting the idea of the Fijian Court system, or the ‘dual court system’ (The Cole Report of September 1984, Parliamentary Paper No. 56, 1985) recommended the consideration of the revival of the Fijian Courts and the Regulations. The issue involves sensitive issues regarding customary laws, cultures and traditions of the indigenous people. It also believed that the success of the Fijian Courts will depend on the commitment of all villagers. The Fijian Court system, abolished in 1967, was the enforcement arm of the Fijian administration and consisted of the *Tikina* Courts and the Provincial Courts. They were respectively established under section 16 and 18 of the Fijian Affairs Act cap 120. They administered the Criminal Offices Code, *Lawa iTaukei*, the Fijian Affairs (Appeals) Regulations, the Fijian Affairs (Courts) Regulations, the Fijian Affairs (Extramural Punishment) Regulations, the Fijian Affairs (Provincial Councils) Regulations, the Fijian Affairs (Interpretation) Regulations, and the Provincial (Public Health) Villages) by-laws of each province. Each *tikina* had a court with a native magistrate. Compliance with the regulations was overseen by the administration head of the *tikina* (*Buli*), supported by provincial enforcement officers (*ovisa ni yasana*).

stakeholders at village level, who have *yet* to recognize the objectives, benefits and urgency of this project. The project envisages being beneficial economically, socially and educationally. The documentation process and the establishment of a database of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture ensures that its owners are properly recognized, identified for the non-commercial use of their knowledge and cultural expressions, and that they are compensated accordingly for the commercial use of their cultural expressions.

Moreover, the creation of such framework is designed to encourage tradition-based innovation and creativity for the custodians. It will also ensure the preservation of know-how, skills, practices and techniques that are pivotal foundations for indigenous Fijians as a group of people with specific cultural identity, as a community, and as an ethnic group. Furthermore, the project maintains that the identification and documentation of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture will ensure that it is properly transmitted, revitalized, and promoted to ensure its maintenance and viability. This is believed to be achieved through the education and training of young people to learn, use and transmit the know-how. Such a plan is also believed to be beneficial to the formulation of strategies for cultural development in Fiji's education and curriculum. In addition, the project is supposed to act as a stepping-stone towards the formation of a Cultural Authority to provide support for the protection of economic interests of the indigenous people in terms of rights to commercialize cultural materials, safeguarding and promoting the interests of the indigenous Fijians and effectively informing and policing the new Bill on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture once signed and enforced.

Kurin argues that the largest obligation imposed by the 2003 UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage is to charge a specific national entity with developing action plans to safeguard its intangible cultural heritage. This is an enormous task which commits national scholars and public officers to prepare comprehensive inventories of intangible heritage, “for critics a huge, never-ending task, using methodologically discredited methodology misconceiving culture as atomistic items, and bearing little relationship to the goal—as if such inventories in themselves could encourage cultural vitality.” (Kurin 2004: 72).

According to Kurin, the typical situation is that within a nation a variety of governmental units, university departments, and other organizations develop rather uncoordinated plans to address one or another aspect of safeguarding activity (Kurin *ibid.*). Rebutting Kurin’s pessimism, from the ACCU Reports⁵⁹⁸, and my participant observation at village and government level at the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture), Fiji appears in an advanced and ‘advantaged’ position in respect to the other Pacific Island nations. Fiji’s *Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki* (National Inventory on Traditional Fijian Knowledge and Expressions of Culture) is demonstrating organizational efficiency, valorization of traditions without necessarily reducing them to a list, and recognition of the myriad of challenges and changes their custodians and their descendants are facing.

One fear is that once documented the traditional heritage is more readily

⁵⁹⁸ The Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) organized a Regional meetings on Promotion of Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (Osaka, 26 February to 1 March, 2004), twenty seven countries attended the meeting; and a Regional Workshop on Inventory-making for Intangible Cultural Heritage Management (Tokyo, December 6-11, 2004), twelve countries presented their reports. Fiji was the only country showing an advanced stage plan for the Pacific region.

expropriated by outsiders (e.g., novelists, musicians, the motion-picture industry) (Brown 2003a, 2003b). From my observation, Fiji's documentation and the database designed to conserve it assures maximum confidentiality. To conform to the objectives of the Intellectual Property IP based *sui generis* protection, discussed in the next chapter, and to the concerns of judicious safeguarding of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture of the indigenous population, the final editing and input of data is restricted to the project officer after consultations with the village chiefs and the Indigenous Intellectual Property Committee members.⁵⁹⁹

Future editing, after consultation with custodians will be made once approved. Viewing of the database material is restricted to senior officers with the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture). However, for general public viewing, and usage of information, traditional custodians have to be informed and their consent obtained to grant access to the information regarding them. All custodians of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture, their tribe, clan or family will have access to the information concerning them, previous approval from the person, or persons, from whom the information was directly collected. In ultimate analysis, the national project seems aiming to inspire with, not impose upon, the traditional custodians with the desire and freedom of self-determine the fate of their own culture, within an adequate environment, a sustaining economic system, and a suitable political context, which in the light of the recent Dec 5th events, I agree with Kurin (2004: 75), are the key

⁵⁹⁹ The Indigenous Intellectual Property Committee was formed by the Ministry of Fijian Affairs to undertake the necessary preparatory work required for the formulation of the Bill on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture. The Committee comprised of officials from the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture), Department of Culture and Heritage, the Fijian Affairs Board and the Native Lands and Fisheries Commission (NLFC).

element of survival and flourish of a culture, hence representing Fiji's wild card.

The Ethnographer as a Circumstantial Volunteer

Between 17-20 May 2005, I was privileged to participate in the Training Workshop on Field Research Methodology Designed for Cultural Mapping Field Officers of the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture) under the facilitation of Sipiriano Nemani. The Director of the Institute, Mr. Misiwaini Qereqeretabua emphasized the fact that being culture 'engulfed' in changes often beyond control, skills and further education are pivotal in the context of the objectives of the training workshop:

Establishing a clearer understanding of the Institute's [IFLC] role on behalf of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs as arms of research that deals directly with the local Fijian communities and villages; understand intellectual property rights and the issue of the [Pacific] Model Law (Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill) for the protection of traditional knowledge and traditional expressions of culture. Understand and learn the current activities of the Institute in the process of facilitating the cultural mapping process and the creation of a database for the traditional knowledge and expressions of culture; appreciating the discipline of anthropology, its themes and lessons in the process of framing a basis for cultural research; understand and evaluate anthropological research design and methodologies; collective support in establishing a guideline for the Institute's research and fieldwork activities.⁶⁰⁰

The confidence of the Institute in the discipline of anthropology seems established also by the participation of another non-native anthropologist, Tara Mar, a graduate student from Canada, who joined the workshop sharing her experience from a UNESCO project in Cambodia, outlining protocols, ethics and

⁶⁰⁰ Indigenous IPR Secretariat Report, 2005: 2.

methodologies employed, and her ongoing applied work in Tailevu assisting the local community in an eco-tourism project.

Similarly, my contribution was focused on the native vs. non-native paradigms of research. In particular, on the experience of *The Sawau Project*, at that time still in the making, I explained that during the course of my ethnography in Beqa, I realized that the anthropological logocentric approach of converting the complex realities of fieldwork in a notebook and then transforming those words into other words denied much of the multi-sensory experience of trying to know the culture I was observing. In the effort to find an alternative way of perceiving culture, minimizing the barriers between myself and them, I realized that my curiosity was also *their* curiosity, thus placing a visual medium in Sawau people's hands could help both us in this re-mapping process of their own culture. I explained that my fieldwork experience was showing me that once the anthropologist clarifies the intentions of his or her project, listens to the native agenda and allows control, non-native and native researcher could ally over, elaborating a collaborative agenda, leaving behind the academic and strategic debates over 'power relations' between indigenous peoples and anthropologists, insiders and outsiders, colonizers and colonized, and instead play complementary roles, reinforcing the reflexive, ethical approach of both indigenous and non-indigenous visual and research methodologies.

Fifteen participants between Institute's staff members and personnel specifically recruited for the Cultural Mapping Project attended the Workshop. Emphasis was given to the discourse of inadequacy of copyrights laws in Fiji, their not recognizing communal rights, the concept of the 'public domain' and other limits and restrictions for indigenous communities. Characteristics of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture

property/ownership in relation to intellectual property were outlined in the Manual:

- Generally orally transmitted.
- Emphasis on preservation and maintenance of culture.
- Socially based-created through the generations via the transmission process.
- Communally amount but a large amount is held by libraries, museums and archives.
- Generally not transferable but transmission, if allowed, is based on a series of cultural qualifications.
- There are often restrictions on how transmission can occur, particularly in relation to sacred or secret material.⁶⁰¹

In conjunction with the cultural mapping project, a particular significance was given to the Bill for the enactment of protection on traditional knowledge and expressions of culture, based on the Pacific Model Law, and currently underway, “[at whose] root is the preservation / maintenance of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture”,⁶⁰² with its requirements of consent from the traditional custodians of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture for non-customary purposes, as the next chapter discusses further.

Stress was given to the issue of ‘confidentiality’ of both the cultural mapping process and the database, which uses a software designed specifically for this project in Fijian language, containing text, images, video and audio recordings pertaining traditional knowledge and expressions of culture for each Fijian village.

As stipulated in the [Pacific] Model Law, a Cultural Authority is to be established with a range of functions. One of which proposed is to “maintain a record of traditional owners and/or knowledge and expressions of culture”. This denotes the establishment and maintaining of a database on traditional knowledge and expressions of culture, entering into it such information as it receives or collects. Access to the database

⁶⁰¹ Training Manual for the “May 2005 Training Workshop on Field Research Methodology Designed for Cultural Mapping Field Officers”, 4.2, p.14.

⁶⁰² Ibid. 4.3, p.15.

would be permitted by the Authority under such terms as it may decide, including restricting it to the owners of the knowledge as the situation may warrant. A database was chosen for the [Pacific] Model Law because it records information and there was a need to record as much TK and EC [traditional knowledge and expressions of culture] before it becomes unobtainable. This meant few formal requirements and an assurance of confidentiality.⁶⁰³

To conform with the objectives of the Intellectual Property project and the concerns for safeguarding of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture of the indigenous population, final editing and input of data is restricted to the project officer after consultations with village heads and the indigenous IPR [intellectual property rights] Committee members. Future editing, after consultation with the custodians will be made once approved. Viewing of database is restricted to senior officers of the office [Institute of Fijian Language and Culture]. However, for general public viewing and usage of information, custodians have to be informed and their consent sort. Besides, information will only be available to custodians of TK and EC [traditional knowledge and expressions of culture], their tribe, clan, family members, upon the initial approval of informants [traditional owners].⁶⁰⁴

A special section of the Manual covers the research ethics in Fiji and the Pacific.

Six key principles were individuated and summarized in the course of the workshop: the principle of *mana*, where is acknowledged the respect of the *mana* and dignity of the ‘researched’, honoring the individual or the community their ownership, responsibilities and their role in participating in the research; the principle of relationships, where is recognized that family/community are linked in obligations that exist before and after the phases of research, reminding that research in an indigenous community needs to be set in a context of enduring relationship rather than an episodic encounter; the principle of reciprocity, where it is essential to identify and incorporate the roles and obligations of the members of a community, for relationships among kin and community members carry

⁶⁰³ Ibid, 5.1.1, p.16.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid. 5.2.8, p.22.

certain obligations; the principle of empowerment, where research is knowledge and knowledge is power, thus research should ultimately facilitate indigenous communities capacity through both involvement in the research in all its phases and use of the research outcomes and resources; the principle of communication, where the community needs to be informed of the developments resulting from their participation in the research, presenting the results and raising awareness of the positive impacts of the research, always providing the opportunity for individual informants to veto their own contribution before these are included in any documentation; the principle of accountability, where any research must be based on clear ethical protocols which include being accountable to the indigenous community for what and how the research is carried out.”⁶⁰⁵

In other words, research must enhance the *mana*, well-being and lives of indigenous people, Nemani observed during the workshop. Outcome of the research should be practical, communally-oriented and particular to the clan/tribe or village researched, he also noted. Doing research, he concluded, must lead to empowering villagers and their communities, advancing their autonomy and increasing their well-being.

The cultural mapping activity under the *Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki* started right after the workshop, at the end of May 2005. By January 2007 it has covered three provinces (Nemani pers. comm.). The National Inventory requires enormous human resources, plus the necessary basic equipment.⁶⁰⁶ At the local level, a

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid. 7.1, p.28-29.

⁶⁰⁶ About 20 computers, scanners, digital cameras, and large amounts of *yagona* to be presented to the village chiefs, elders, stating the purpose of the visit, and requesting their permission to enter the village in good faith.

*Tikina*⁶⁰⁷ Administrator will be assigned the task of coordinating and assisting two Field (Research) Officers in their collection of cultural data from a particular *tikina*. As previously explained, given the sensitivity of the data collected, it emerged from the workshop that it would be fundamental to appoint research officers considered *itaukei*, originally from that particular *tikina*. This denotes that the researcher has close ties and cultural affiliation with the research milieu, while at provincial level a Provincial Coordinator assisted by a computer operator, will be responsible for supervising the collection and the ‘verification’ of the data collected at provincial level.

Conclusion

Ethnographic research, participant observation and ‘circumstantial volunteering’, are desirable tools for understanding the development process of the different national and transnational layers of protection of indigenous cultural knowledge. It appears that in the most recent examples of legal protection of TKEC, the heritage policy makers still use the meaning and scope of the term traditional knowledge and cultural expressions arbitrarily, confusing it with other terms such as ‘Expressions of Folklore’, ‘Indigenous Culture and Intellectual Property’ and ‘Intangible and Tangible Cultural Heritage’.⁶⁰⁸

At the same time, the division between tangible, natural, and intangible heritage and the creation of separate lists for each is also arbitrary. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett observes that “those dealing with natural heritage argue that most of the sites on the world heritage list are what they are by virtue of human interaction with the environment. Similarly,

⁶⁰⁷ A *tikina* represents a group of villages related and having a common ancestor. Two Hundred *tikina* exist in Fiji, and numerous *tikina* made up a province.

⁶⁰⁸ Among others, see WIPO 2003: 25.

tangible heritage, without intangible heritage, is a mere husk or inert matter. As for intangible heritage, it is not only embodied, but also inseparable from the material and social worlds of persons” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 60).

Amadou Hampâté Bâ (1901-91), Malian historian, novelist, and member of the UNESCO Executive Board since the late 1960s, is credited with coining the now famous phrase: “the death of an old man is like the burning of a library”, a remark used as an insignia on UNESCO webpages and publications, although rephrased “Africa loses a library when an old man dies”. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, after Diana Taylor, has recently argued that the library metaphor, while affirming the person, confuses archive with repertoire, a distinction particularly important to understand intangible cultural heritage as embodied knowledge and practice.

The repertoire is always embodied, manifested and passed on through performance (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 60; Taylor 2003: 24). She also points out that Australian Aboriginals maintained their ‘intangible heritage’ for over 30,000 years without the help of cultural policy. The same could be said for the Sawau tribe and their *vilavilairevo* performance, which as seen in the previous chapters evolved and changed over the last two hundred years or so. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett concludes arguing that change is intrinsic to culture, and measures intended to preserve it, conserve it, safeguard it, and sustain particular cultural practices are caught between freezing the practice and addressing the inherently processual nature of culture (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 58-59).

Heritage interventions appear to me double-edged. On the one hand they attempt to slow the rate of change in the face of galloping globalization. On the other hand, they

offer a form of *sui generis* protection against the same burgeoning globalization, for global changes may facilitate further appropriation, misuse and distortion of traditional cultural expressions. The Australian Aboriginals' measures of protection of their intangible heritage worked well until Mr. Bulun Bulun, an artist from Arnhemland saw his 1980 bark painting *Magpie Geese and Water Lilies at the Waterhole*, reproduced on a t-shirt in Darwin around 1996. His work depicts knowledge concerning Djulibinyamurr, a waterhole complex situated in the Arafura Swamp, and was created in accordance to the traditional laws and customs of his clan group (the Ganalbingu people) and their cultural heritage.

Moreover, because the *Mabo* case, discussed above, established that one criterion for determining native title is ongoing connection to the land, the *Bulun Bulun* case threatened to usher in a new era in which traditional painting was used as evidence in land-claims litigation (Brown 2003a: 48). Legal scholar Frank Brennan echoes the opinions of other lawyers and activists when he argues that Aboriginal art has become for its creators “a way of sharing the land through understanding and respect” (Brennan quoted in Brown *ibid.*).

Mr. Bulun Bulun never consented to his work being altered and copied onto fabric in Indonesia, imported and sold nationally in Australia by t-shirt manufacturer R&T Textiles. The t-shirt company admitted copyright infringement⁶⁰⁹ and the judgment in *Bulun Bulun and Milpirrurru v. R&T Textiles PTY LTD* was handed down in September 1998.⁶¹⁰ This breakthrough judgment raises issues in relation to copyright and

⁶⁰⁹ Australia Copyright Act 1968 and Trade Practices Act 1974.

⁶¹⁰ (1998) 41 IPR 513. 1082 FCA (3 Sept. 1998). The artwork was the subject of an earlier action, *Bulun Bulun v. Nejlam* (1989) where it was copied without Mr. Bulun Bulun's consent onto t-

indigenous art and it has sparked a lot of legal analysis on the protection of indigenous traditional cultural expressions and whether the case creates a means for the protection of communal interests under intellectual property law. Justice Von Doussa considered that a fiduciary relationship existed between the artist Bulun Bulun and the Ganalbingu clan group and that the artist had a fiduciary duty towards the community under which “the artist is required to act in relation to the artwork in the interest of the Ganalbingu people to preserve the integrity of their culture, and ritual knowledge”.⁶¹¹

However, it has been noted that a fiduciary relationship does not vest any equitable interest in the copyright in the Ganalbingu people (MacDonald 1998: 2). Rather, “their primary right, in the event of a breach of obligation by the fiduciary is a right in personam to bring action against the fiduciary to enforce the obligation.”⁶¹² In this case, where the cultural specificity of copyright law was directly at issue (Bowrey 2001), the judge considered that Mr. Bulun Bulun had taken appropriate action to enforce the copyright in his bark painting *Magpie Geese and Water Lilies at the Waterhole*,⁶¹³ and had therefore fulfilled the obligations he owed as a fiduciary, concurring with Bulun Bulun’s attorney, who stated that the artist works as “custodian or trustee on behalf of the traditional owners” (Golvan 1989, 1992 quoted in Brown 2003a: 46).

Brown argues that this much-cited case may be the harbinger of a change, because it acknowledges that Aboriginal clan communities have specific fiduciary rights in

shirts marketed under the name “The Aboriginals” by Flash Screenprinters. They had reproduced Mr. Bulun Bulun’s 1980 painting *Magpie Geese and Water Lilies at the Waterhole* without consent or proper acknowledgment, calling the t-shirt design “At the Waterhole – a design originated from Central Arnhemland”. However, the matter was settled prior to hearing (Janke 2003: 51).

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Ibid.

⁶¹³ Now conserved in the permanent collection of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

religious art that must be reckoned with outside their communities, although these rights do not legally qualify as joint authorship (Brown 2005: 53). ‘Fiduciary’ refers to a relationship of one person to another, where the former is bound to exercise rights and powers in good faith for the benefit of the other (Janke 2003: 59).

Similarly, in 1993, imported carpets reproducing copyright works of indigenous Aboriginal artists from Yirrkala were found to be in infringements of each indigenous artist’s works. The artistic works embodied pre-existing cultural clan (the Rirratingu) images that were altered by the carper manufacturer, thereby distorting the cultural messages of the works. The ‘carpets case’ resulted in the landmark Federal Court decision *M*, Payunka, Marika and Others v. Indofurn Pty Ltd*,⁶¹⁴ representing and accommodation of copyright law to protect traditional cultural expression.

It could be a painting or a performance that is appropriated or distorted. In the mind of the traditional artist or performer—like in the case of the Sawau’s *dauvila* (firewalkers)—there is no substantial difference. Colin Golvan, the barrister who argued the case in Darwin, confronts the challenge that western law and technology pose to indigenous cultures, in a series of essays exploring the possibilities and limits of copyright law for the protection of Aboriginal art (Golvan 1989, 1992, 1998, 1999). Golvan’s point is that copyright law should be modified to protect indigenous art *styles*, not just their manifestation in concrete works of performances, to prohibit the bastardization of indigenous art. Brown observes that after Australian companies were sued for infringing the copyright of Aboriginal artists, they began to print fabrics with *fake* designs, ‘caricatures’ of Aboriginal art (Brown 2003a: 89).

⁶¹⁴ (1994) 30 IPR 209.

The next chapter discusses the value of the Fijian National Inventory on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture in conjunction with the Bill on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture, not in terms of a registry where to conserve traditions, but as a basic document, offering *sui generis* protection measures—in lieu of western IPRs—related to traditional cultural expressions and knowledge communally owned, helping establishing ‘cultural rights’ in conjunction with the establishment and enforcement of a *sui generis* normative instrument. I recognize that we should be wary of ‘totalizing’ solutions to complex problems (Brown 2003a: 8).

However, ‘documentation’ per se does not necessarily ‘freeze’ intangible cultural heritage, nor does it make intangible heritage ‘tangible’, nor stops the natural processes of transmission, re-creation, change. I believe that documentation, like the ethnographic process, should not be a ‘one size fits all’ one, but taken and evaluated case by case. In the case of Fiji’s social domain, I don’t contest that the possession of heritage is probably also a “mark of modernity” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 59), but I argue that in the case of the Sawau’s heritage, and *The Sawau Project* discussed further, is primarily a mark of authenticity, identity and recognition.

Legal scholar Susan Scafidi argues that authenticity joins ownership as a secondary tool for protecting against the appropriation of intangible goods. The process of defining authenticity suggests a possible route for extending legal protection to cultural products. Creation of ‘authenticity marks’, similar to the certification marks of standards organizations or the collective marks of membership associations, would offer a middle ground between source-community ownership of a full bundle of property rights and the current legal vacuum (Scafidi 2005: 66).

CHAPTER 7

Guarding the Intangible: Part II Cultural Property, Ardent Taboos

Introduction: In re the Nagol Jump

Land diving, *nagol* or *nangol*, is a main attraction of ethnic tourism in Vanuatu's South Pentecost island. In pre-colonial times land dive was always performed in association with the yam harvest in April (Jolly 1994). Like the Sawau tribe of Beqa Island with their *vilavilairevo* performance, the Sa speakers from the south of Pentecost Island have chosen to resist westernization and proclaim their *kastom* identity through touristic performances of *nagol* (land dive) performance, which is exactly a demonstration of tradition as a potent ethnic marker, and traditional knowledge, and as in the case of the Sawau in some cases intensifying the antagonism between church and *kastom* groups and their leaders (De Burlo 1996). In the 1990s the rite has developed even more as a tourist event, being performed a few times a year, and on occasion in months out of the April season, and not just on Pentecost, but also on the Island of Santo and no longer exclusively by Sa speakers (Jolly 1994).

In the *nagol* jump case (*In re the Nagol Jump, Assal and Vatu v. Council of Chiefs of Santo*),⁶¹⁵ one group of applicants from Pentecost Island tried to prevent the respondents from performing the *nagol* jump on the island of Santo appropriating their performance.⁶¹⁶ In this case, the Supreme Court of Vanuatu had to evaluate an 'abuse' of

⁶¹⁵ (1980-1994) Van LR 545

⁶¹⁶ Lindstrom reproduces the text of the strenuous objection of the chiefs from Pentecost Island, who citing traditional cultural policy argued that: "The *Nangol* tradition is a custom that belongs

traditional knowledge. Marahare observes that the use of traditional practices as exhibitions for tourists can also be a form of ‘misuse’, particularly when customary rules regulating their use are not complied with (Marahare 2004: 2). In July 1992, the Chief Justice based his decision on ‘substantial justice’ and ‘in conformity with custom’, and ordered that the Nagol jumping should be repatriated to Pentecost from whence it came from. The point, Marahare argues, is that “this kind of misuse needs to be prevented, but cannot be under existing laws,” (Marahare 2004: 2) and sole reliance upon customary law is sometime insufficient (Forsyth 2003).

The fundamental difference between the customary laws of the indigenous communities and the intellectual property rights in their western interpretation is in the establishment of the concept of collective ownership of the rights relating to the traditional cultural expressions. In the two cases of the Aboriginal artists seen in the previous chapter, the artists were the material executors of the work, thus they could take legal steps personally, but always on behalf of their clan as well. However, in the Pentecost Island’s case, the situation was more complicated due to the fact that the ritual is collectively owned. Lucas-Schloetter (2004) argues then that the effectiveness of the protection of traditional cultural expressions by means of customary law appears at first sight somewhat limited. Customary law protection relies on norms and sanctions which seem to make sense only to members of the community.

Since many of the individuals engaged in the unauthorized use of those traditional

only to South Penetecost and it must not be taken to other regions or islands...the practice of taking peoples’ traditions like Nangol all about will result in the devaluation of custom and the loss of South Pentecost’s identity... Mister Willi Asal and his group’s arrangement to perform Nangol on Santo does not follow correct (traditional) relations because the Pentecost community of North [Luganville] has no knowledge of this plan... it is not good to import a custom from one island to another island.” (*Vanuatu Weekly* May 9, 1992: 5, cited in Lindstrom 1994: 69-70).

cultural expressions are outsiders of the relevant community, or foreigners, they may not have the incentive to respect the norms in the interest of the general community, thus fear of sanctions as a factor in securing compliance is simply non-existent due to the elders' lack of jurisdiction, and the lack of common communal, and ritual interest (Kuruk 1999: 786). In reality, as Lucas-Schloetter (2004) observes, the question is not whether the penalties of customary law are applicable to outsiders, but rather the extent to which the rights relating to traditional cultural expressions—as granted by custom to certain members of the clan or tribe—are recognized by national legislation, and thus could be easily enforced. In another relevant case further discussed in the next section, *Yumbulul v. Reserve Bank of Australia*,⁶¹⁷ the court held that “Australia’s copyright law does not provide adequate recognition of Aboriginal community claims to regulate the reproductions and use of works which are essentially communal in origin.”⁶¹⁸

In the previous chapter I have explained that the term ‘cultural property’ tends to embody a static view of culture focusing on legal claims to tangibles as a culture’s property. Legal scholars Daniel Shapiro⁶¹⁹ and Lyndel Prott,⁶²⁰ have recently argued that this interpretation is contrary to an expanded view of the field of cultural property and its relations with the intangibles, tending to minimize what is generally viewed as the hallmark of cultural property: its constitutive relation to the nation or people whose cultural expression it is (Shapiro 2005, 2006; Prott 1992). Cultural property may be held individually or by a group, or may be the inalienable cultural patrimony of a nation (Hutt, Blanco et al. 2004: xi).

⁶¹⁷ (1991) 21 IPR 481.

⁶¹⁸ IPR 1991, Vol. 21, 490 (See Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 319; Farley 2000: 32).

⁶¹⁹ President of the International Cultural Property Society, USA.

⁶²⁰ Former Director of UNESCO Division of Cultural Heritage (2001-2003).

Legal scholar Susan Scafidi (2001) has recently argued that both intellectual property law and cultural property law attempt to protect physical embodiments of intangible goods. However, if the first tends to protect ideas that may be appropriated and replicated in tangible form ‘co-equal’ with the first embodiment, by contrast, much cultural property consists of unique one-of-a-kind-objects whose status as cultural property derives from community recognition rather individual Romantic genius. In other words, cultural property and cultural products share a participatory structure of creation or at least recognition, while intellectual property looks to individual genius.

Moreover, cultural property law has in effect moved from its location within the world of heritage conservation to fuse with notions of ‘cultural rights’ (Cowan et al. 2001), protecting historical objects that have acquired cultural significance over time (Scafidi *ibid.*). However, cultural products derive from ongoing expressions and development of community symbols and practices. Thus, they are neither new or old, but in a sense both (Scafidi *ibid.*). Any extension of intellectual property law to cultural products must then take into account the singularity of this category of intangible property. In addition, both cultural and intellectual property rights are central to the right of self-determination (Posey 1990, 2004).

The *nagol* jump case in Vanuatu when juxtaposed to the Sawau’s situation in Fiji held a tremendous interest because it raises the question: why should a society based on minimal personal property that incurs relatively modest economic returns from community performances be concerned with issues of ownership, misrepresentation and repatriation? Who may claim ownership of an idea-turned-property? To answer these and similar questions, notions of law, borrowing from cultural anthropology, must explicitly

recognize the socially constructed nature of property. Thus, this chapter starts with a discussion of the delicate issue of ownership, for it plays a fundamental role in the future of traditional cultural expressions protection.

It has been argued that a denial of ownership concepts in indigenous and local communities could nourish the assumption that traditional knowledge is and should remain part of the public domain (Dutfield, 2004, 2000). These arguments were always based on the assumption that traditional knowledge is by definition collectively held and part of the public domain. However, when customary laws provide sufficient rules to answer the question of how traditional knowledge and cultural expressions were acquired, possessed and shared, the argument against some form of protection no longer seems plausible.

Leistner observes that the object is to determine which protection systems best meet the specific needs of the culture bearers and how existing protection systems would have to be modified in order to better serve the interests of traditional knowledge holders and to set incentives for continuing innovation in indigenous cultural heritage legislation (Leistner 2004: 58). Indigenous societies, like the Fijian, often consider each member as having individual rights and collective responsibilities that are linked inextricably. Dutfield (2003) notes that maybe the persistence of these ‘collective responsibilities’ is more of a reason why the formal intellectual property system results inappropriate.

In this context, several variables affecting collective TKEC, emerge from the concerns raised by some indigenous communities, like the Sawau. The following sections will examine the legal implications addressing these concerns, a taxonomy of which could be condensed in a scheme expanding Palethorpe &

Verhulst (2000: 20) model:

TEMPORAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriation of TKEC in the public domain • Dichotomy between preservation and evolution of TKEC • Increasing pressure from modern technology and globalization 	SPATIAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriation due to no international minimum standards • Authentication in international trade
PROPRIETORIAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriation of TKEC in the public domain and through imitation • Misuse use and commodification of TKEC 	SOCIETAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriation or imitation • Inappropriate use or distortion • Disclosure of sacred information

Table 7.1 TKEC appropriation variable matrix

Title and Taboo: Custodianship of the ‘Gift’ in Sawau Society

Looking for a moment into the western theoretical discussions dominating the turn of the 21st century about the authenticity of historical sites and monuments and their intangible values, art historian Tomaszewski (2003) argues that these discussions actually contributed to narrowing the western perception of idea of cultural property. More precisely, in the mind of the European conservators it is mainly the material, tangible values of historical monuments that are encoded and it is only in those material values that the authenticity of a monument is perceived. The explanation of these phenomena is not found either in the Judaic tradition, or in the philosophy of ancient Greece or Rome, which accommodating the theories of Plato were giving uncompromised priority to ideals over corporeal and material aspects.

The origin of the western ‘materialistic’ approach to the values of spiritual and historical sites lies instead, according to Tomaszewski (2003), in the Christian tradition,

hidden behind the traditions of the cult of holy relics. Subsequently, a secularization of holy relics—mainly architectural—took place during the Italian Renaissance, and it was in this manner that humanists regarded the ruins of ancient pagan Rome.

In an illuminating essay “Intellectual Property Laws in the South Pacific: Friend or Foe?” Forsyth argues that “intellectual property rights were pervasive in many of the countries in the Pacific region *prior* to colonisation. However, the efficacy of these traditional systems of protection is predicated upon the existence of small and closely knit communities. As the forces of globalisation and urbanisation loosen the traditional ties of these communities, the intellectual property systems lose much of their power.” (Forsyth 2003: 4). Traditionally in the Pacific region, according to Forsyth (2003), no meaningful distinction was drawn between tangible and intangible property. Rather, just as a community owned an area of land, and the right to certain intangible properties such as dances, rituals, performances, songs or knowledge about the medicinal uses of plants, whose values are still often transmitted through taboos on age, sex and even gender restrictions. Notably, despite the heavy Christianization in the Pacific region, the cult of customary ‘relics’ and ‘icons’ in the Pacific shows that their tangible aspect is not important per se. Tangible relics and icons in the Pacific region are honored for their non-material values, reflecting *mana*, or the grace of ancestral spirits.

One of the key heritage rights that indigenous peoples call for in relation to cultural and intellectual property is the right to ensure that any means to protect them is premised on the principle of self determination, which includes the right to maintain and develop their own cultures and knowledge systems. Coombe notes that:

Indigenous peoples are peoples who make claims to indigeneity, although they may not yet be recognized as such within their states or by the United Nations; they may have very diverse interests...peoples who are already internationally recognized as indigenous appear to be much more interested in making claims with respect to indigenous knowledge subservient to their larger claims for self-determination and related rights to control territory based on norms of respect for their cultural integrity as a people, and the significance of ancestral lands to their cultural heritage, whereas others whose claims to indigeneity are nascent and largely unacknowledged and those who must make their claims as communities who embody 'traditional lifestyles,' (the CBD [Convention on Biological Diversity] language that seems to refer to a degree of independence from market structures and modern agriculture and living, at least partially on a subsistence basis) appear to be more oriented to ascertaining how these CBD provisions might provide them with sources of social legitimation political leverage and alternative sources of income. (Coombe 2001: 277)

In the Eurocentric discourse, 'cultural heritage' marks the underlying connection and sense of right of belonging between a cultural group and its identifying cultural symbols and products, but remains essentially a collective, public notion, belonging by definition in the realm of public interest and held for the public good (Shapiro, 2005: 4; Mason 1999 quoted in Roussin 2003: 707). 'Cultural property' instead, is "that specific form of property that enhances identity, understanding, and appreciation for the culture that produced that particular property" (Gerstenblith: 1995: 569). An explanation of the Sawau tribe's Naivilaqata (*bete*) clan's 'ownership' of the *vilavilairevo*, requires elaborating on the emerging concept of inseparability of 'cultural heritage' from the more strictly legal definition of 'cultural property' (see Roussin 2003: 710). In fact, in Fijian terms, only a symbiotic association among the two makes possible to juxtapose the sense of 'belongingness' between the Naivilaqata clan, their identifying cultural symbols and practices (their 'cultural heritage'), with the

more static and legalistic view of culture embedded in the term ‘cultural property’.

Moreover, the combination of the two concepts becomes particularly relevant as a reification of identity in the case of intangible, immaterial ownerships, like the *vilavilairevo*. While the physical cultural heritage is designed to survive long after the death of the person who produced it, the fate of the intangible heritage is much more closely related to its creators as it often depends on oral transmission (Dutfield 2003: 24), which is part of the ‘collective responsibility’. Daes observes that “indigenous peoples do not view their heritage in terms of property at all—that is, something which has an owner and is used for the purpose of extracting economic benefits—but in terms of community and individual responsibility... For indigenous peoples, heritage is a bundle of relationships, rather than a bundle of economic rights” (Daes 1997a: 3).

Building on Manek & Lettington (2001), property in the case of the Sawau *yavusa* Naivilaqata *mataqali* is more about ‘custodianship’ rather than ‘ownership’ of the *vilavilairevo*. Which in legal terms translates into a ‘fiduciary duty’ a ‘fiduciary responsibility’ similar to the one Justice Von Doussa recognized between the artist Bulun Bulun his clan group and his community discussed in the previous chapter. Seneca in his *De beneficiis* (VII, 6) and modern philosophers like Kant (1785) and Fichte (1791) had already clearly outlined the difference of ‘owning a thing’ and ‘owning the right to use it” (Kant 1785; Fichte 1791 quoted in Pozzo 2005: 9). The Sawau people own a communal right over the *vilavilairevo* which any descendent of the Sawau *yavusa* Naivilaqata *mataqali* can

use under a fiduciary duty, a directly fiduciary responsibility towards the *mataqali* and indirectly towards the *yavusa* involving both moral and economic rights, which are inevitably intertwined.

As previously outlined in the Sawau's social organization discussion,⁶²¹ the Naivilaqata clan is the group designated as guardian of the traditional knowledge associated to the *vilavilairevo* and actively involved in the ceremony. Rights of use associated with the concept of custodianship entail obligations, obligations to both the Tui Sawau and to the Sawau wider community, obligations of appropriate safeguarding of the 'gift' the Sawau tribe has been passing down generation after generation, since Tuiqalita received it from the Tui Namoliwai.⁶²² These elements of custodianship, safeguarding and identity are also emerging from statements collected from the Tui Sawau:

Vinaka, na vilavilairevo, na kena bibi vei keitou na yavusa o Sawau baleta e isolisoli e soli vei ira na neitou qase ena gauna e liu, ka keitou se sega tiko ga me keitou maroroya ena vuku ni kena isolisoli bibi baleta ni sega tale ni dua na vanua e caka tiko kina na vilavilairevo ka keitou ga na yavusa qo ka keitou vakayacora tiko yagona, ya na kena bibi kina vei keitou na vilavilairevo.

Vilavilairevo is important to the Sawau tribe since it is a unique gift given to our elders in pre-history. We have yet to safeguard it for it is an important gift and there is no other place where the ceremony is undertaken. It is specific to our tribe. That is basically why *vilavilairevo* is important to us.

E dina sara ga na i tukutuku qo, ni veisivi ni ka vakailavo, kevaka era na sega na saravanua era na sega so ni yaga vakalevu na vilavilairevo baleta ni sai koya qo na ivurevure ni veivaka torocaketaki yaco tiko ena neitou koro ia ena vuku ni noqu itutu vaka Tui Sawau, au dodonu meu vakaraitaka sara mevaka ni sa vakaraitaki oti ena taro naba dua na kena bibi vei keimami na isolisoli. Qo kevaka me qai sega na saravanua, au na

⁶²¹ See Chapter 3.

⁶²² See Appendix G for a full narrative of the myth.

vakadreta na kena maroroi kei na kena kilai tiko na isolisoli qo ena veigauna e vinakati kina e dua na vulagi dokai e lako yani se cava ga e caka me dau vakayacori kina me rawa ni maroroi tiko kina na isolisoli qo, vinaka.

As the Tui Sawau, I would like to reiterate that *vilavilairevo* is a gift close to our hearts. If there was no tourism, I would encourage the transmission and safeguarding of this unique heritage through the facilitation of *vilavilairevo* as a form of entertainment for dignitaries and guests of our tribe, or in any occasion our performance is needful, enhancing furthermore the protection of our gift.

Io vinaka, au vakabauta niu tokona na nona tataro qo me vaka na veivuke ni matanitu ena maroroi kina na isolisoli ko keitou vakayagataka tiko na vilavilairevo me vaka ni kevaka ena sega, ena lakolako beka e dua na gauna sa na seavu yani na kena totoka na kena rairai vinaka na isolisoli qo. Vakabauta ke vaka e tiko na veivukei me dau vakataucokotaki na kena maroroi, na kena tabaki na ivola i tukutuku me baleta na vilavilairevo, au vakabauta ni na yaga sara vakalevu kina vanua o Beqa vaka kina ki na matanitu.

Government assistance in the safeguarding of this unique heritage, the *vilavilairevo*, is of paramount importance. If not, there will come a time when the beauty of this gift of ours will eventually fade away. I believe that if we receive assistance in terms of protection and safeguarding, through publications, *vilavilairevo* will be valuable to the *vanua* of Beqa and to the nation as well. (Tui Sawau pers. comm.)⁶²³

The issue of the ‘safeguarding’ of the ceremony from members of the Naivilaqata (*bete*) clan emerged in several occasions during my fieldwork in Beqa, in relation to the control that the *bete* clan (Naivilaqata) try to maintain over other groups from Beqa performing the *vilavilairevo*, and in the case of the groups from Yanuca and Lapanoni, previously discussed.⁶²⁴ The issue of previous authorization is clearly stated by the Tui Sawau:

O ira taucoko na veilawalawa tale, se na veisoqosoqo ko ra vilavilairevo tiko e so e se qai tiko na nodra ituvatuva mera vilavilairevo, e tiko taucoko

⁶²³ Interview Apr. 30 2005 h.15:00, Samabula, Suva.

⁶²⁴ See Chapter 5.

na nodra sema ni veiwekani ena neitou koro me vaka ga ni vivi na usu, era dau lako mai era mai kerekere, era dau tudei ga vata kei na yaqona, niu dau solia ga na veivakadonui, ni sa soli ga na veivakadonui, ya sa na koya sara ga, ya ga e vinaka kina ni dua ga na isoqosoqo nodratou mai Soliyaga, o Yanuca, na veivanua kece qo era veiwekani kece ga. Ya ga e sega nira vakadeitaka ni, era saumi ena nodra lai vila, ia na sau ni vila e lako kece tiko ga vua na turaga na Tui Sawau.

All groups performing the *vilavilairevo*, have a connection or kin-ties with our village [Dakuibeqa]. They come to us to seek our permission with a traditional offer of *yaqona*. When I give my consent, they are allowed to do it. It is good that there are other groups [not from Dakuibeqa] like those from Soliyaga, Yanuca and so on, for all these groups are related to us. (Tui Sawau pers. comm.)⁶²⁵

On top of the assent of the Tui Sawau, any Sawau group seeking permission to perform the *vilavilairevo*, has to receive the consent of the *bete levu* (high priest), currently ninety-year-old Sevanaia Waqasaqa, residing in the village of Daduibeqa, Beqa. In Fijian there are two main expressions for ‘gift’: *iloloma* and *isolisoli*.⁶²⁶ While the first is embedded in the meaning of care, love, thus genuinely interpreted as ‘present’ or ‘token of love’, similar to the French term *cadeau*, the latter implies utterly the concepts of ‘grant’, ‘permit’. In the case of *vilavilairevo*, and similar cases,⁶²⁷ *isolisoli* has to be interpreted more as an ‘endowment’, ‘a natural talent’, like in French *don*. The term *isolisoli*, associated

⁶²⁵ Interview Apr. 30 2005 h.15:00, Samabula, Suva.

⁶²⁶ A third expression, *nabu*, as seen in Chapter 2, is recurrent in the narratives behind the origin and events associated with the *vilavilairevo*. That is a forfeit, usually a present of food brought to the man who told tales in a *bure*, in the case of the Sawau a large *bure* called Nakauyama.

⁶²⁷ “*Baleta na isolisoli qo sega wale ga ni tiko ga eke na isolisoli ni vilavilairevo, na vei yasai Viti e tu tale ga kina na vei isolisoli vaka oqo. E tu mai vatulele, Kadavu, Koro, Vanua Balavu. Na vei isolisoli kecega e sa mana tiko ni na gauna oqo, qo na isolisoli kecega ni kalou.*”

[This is because ‘gifts’ like *vilavilairevo* do not exist only here [Beqa], are manifest also in other parts of Fiji, such as Vatulele, Kadavu, Koro, Vanua Balavu. All gifts are *mana*, these are gifts from God.]

(Apenisa Kuruiwaca, *bete*, Naceva. Dec. 1, 2004 h.12:00. He is referring to the ‘red prawns callers’ in the island of Vatulele, the ‘turtle callers’ in the island of Kadavu, the *masi* makers in Koro, and ‘the *yawa* (mullet fish) callers’ in Vanua Balavu).

to *vilavilatrevo* is emerging from several accounts collected in Beqa and outside Beqa, creating a synallagmatic relation between the cognition of endowment and that of custodianship.

Na noqu mai kerea saraga ena matai ni gauna me vaka ga na noqu itovo vakavanua au mai kerea kina ena dua na tabua. Au kauta mai kina e dua na tabua kei na dua na yaqona baleta niu kila niu sa vakarau laki cakava e dua na cakacaka bibi. Au sa mai kerea kina e dua na cakacaka bibi me sa noqu. Ratou sa mani ciqomi au. Ya o koya na bete levu saraga ea laki mate mai Idia [Semi Raikadra] baleta au kila qo e dua na isolisoli sa na mai noqu tawamudu me yacova mai nikua. Kau sa kila kina na kena yaga niu sa vakatorocaketakina tu kina na noqu koro, na kenai rairai na kece ena dua ga na tabua au sa kila na kena yaga. Au lako ga mai au tukuna, “Na tabua qo, na batina qo.” Sa dua noqui revo. Sa oti. Sega tale niu vakacabora. Na kena yaqona ga ogo na kena sevusevu. Sa qai kaya na bete levu na kena bibi na tabua kei na noqu sa lako mai, “Sa vinaka, keitou sa na laki dolava yani, keitou sa solia saraga i ligamu.” “Vila nikua, vila ni mataka, vila bogi va, vila bogi lima, na nomui cegu e toka ga i cake. Sega ni dua e rawa ni tukuna vei iko nai revo ni mataka e vinaka. Nomu vakanuinui tiko ni qori e dua ga na isolisoli.”

When I came to initially ask for the gift, in accordance with my culture and custom, I brought a whale’s tooth. I brought a whale’s tooth and a bunch of *yaqona* because I know I was going to do something sacred and unique. I asked for it and they received me gladly. This was the high priest that died in India [Semi Raikadra] and I knew that this gift will be mine forever. I’ve seen the benefits with the development in my village, with the presentation of a single whale’s tooth. I just brought the *tabua* and I told them, “Here’s the *tabua*, the *revo* is mine”. That’s it. I did not need to formally present the whale’s tooth. The *yaqona* was used as my *isevusevu*. The high priest then told me of the significance of the *tabua* and then indicated, “Thanks, we’ll open it for you, its in your hands.” “Whether you perform today, for four nights in a row, or five, you will still feel uncertain about it. No one can assure you that tomorrow’s performance will be fine. You need to maintain the belief that this is just a gift.” (Kuruiwaca pers. comm.)⁶²⁸

Na vuna ga qo baleta qo e dua na isolisoli a solia o Tui Namoliwai ki vei Tui Qalita, Ia na kena vosa ni yalayala “na nomu kawa kece me yacova na rusa ni vuravura era na rawa ni vilaka tiko nai revo”. Na isolisoli ga ea soli mai, e isolisoli vakalou talega. Au sa tauyavutaka tiko kina e dua na mata vila .Au a kerea vua na kena i liuliu sai koya na gone turaga na

⁶²⁸ Interview Dec. 1 2004 h.12:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

Tui Sawau. Vei keimami, baleta na neimami veirokorokovi keimami dau mai kerea vua na turaga na Tui Sawau baleta o koya sa nona na vila. Sa soli vua. Keimami mai kerea ga vua me rawa ni dua na na vila me keimami laki cakava me rawa ni vakatorocaaketaki kina na neimami koro.

The reason being that *vilavilairevo* was a gift given by Tui Namoliwai to Tui Qalita and there were some sort of oath made which states: “all your generations till the end of the world will walk on hot stones.” *vilavilairevo* is a gift from God. I've also started my own *vila* group. I asked permission to the traditional head, which is the *Tui Sawau*, to perform. For us, since we respect each other very much, we always request traditionally the Tui Sawau for he owns the *vila*. It was given to him. We ask him so that we can perform the *vila* to develop our village. (Tabanuqa pers. comm.)⁶²⁹

Sa dua na ka kalougata ni mai kunea tu na cauravou koya na isolisoli veivakakurabuitaki koya. Yaco na gauna e muri me ra valuti e Navakaisese ka sa kauta vata tu kei na vilavilairevo.

Much later, when the village of Navakaisese was abandoned, the people took this remarkable gift with them, and still to the present day their descendants practice this unusual power of *vilavilairevo*. (Aporosa Bulivou pers. comm. to Tubanavau)⁶³⁰

From different accounts collected, emerges that the respect of land, the chief and the elders from Dakuibeqa is fundamental for maintaining the authorization to perform the *vilavilairevo*. The permission granted to intertribe groups is not necessarily lifetime. In cases of inappropriate behavior such could be ‘revoked’ from the Tui Sawau or the *bete levu*.

E na dua na gauna keimami lako kina I veikau ,voleka yani I Rukua a mani tubu kina e dua na veisa vosa kei ire na qase mai Rukua. Qo e a baleta na qele, na qale vaka Sawau ia e ratou sa tekivu tea tiko mai o ratou mai Rukua. Ia ena siga ya ra sa lako yani na turaga ike i Dakuibeqa, sa caka sara na veisa vosa. Ratou tukuna yani na qase ike “cegu nai sele, ni suka i muri.” Sa cegu nai sele ka sa yaco na veisa vosa ka sa katakata sara. Ra sa mani suka mai na cauravou kei ira na turaga ike. Oti toka e vica na sia ratou sa vura na qase mai Rukua na mai soro i

⁶²⁹ Interview Dec. 1 2004 h.10:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

⁶³⁰ Recorded and translated into English by Mika Tubanavau from Rukua in 1978 (Crosby 1988: 62).

valelevu vata kei noqu tata levu o Semi Raikadra. Sa dua na veivosaki vinaka a vakayacori ka sa ratou vosataki vinaka sara na qase mai Rukua. Ia au vakabauta ni dina a sa ciqomi iratou o Semi Raikadra ia vaka e sega soti ni a loma vinaka kina. Sa qai ratou dau laki vila tiko o iratou mai Rukua tekivu mai na gauna koya sa vaka me ratou sa qesa tiko ga. Sa mani yacova sara mai na gauna ratou sa sega tale ni qai vila.

One time we went to the forest, as we neared the village of Rukua, there was a verbal insulting with the elders of Rukua. This was about the land, the land of Sawau that the people of Rukua had begun planting on. Some men from Dakuibeqa came over and disagreements continued. The elders from Dakuibeqa said: “Put the knife down, you all turn back (meaning stop the planting and go back to Rukua).” They put the knife down but continued the insulting that at one point became heated up. The youths and the men from our village then made return to Dakuibeqa. After a few days, the elders from Rukua came to apologize to the chief’s house and to my uncle [Samu’s father’s elder brother], Semi Raikadra [*bete levu*]. There was a lively discussion and the elders from Rukua got a good lesson. I believe that even though Semi Raikadra accepted their apology, deep inside he was not convinced. The people from Rukua kept performing the *vilavilairevo*, but from that day on they kept getting burnt. Then came the time when they couldn’t perform the *vilavilairevo* anymore.⁶³¹ (Vakuruivalu pers. comm.)⁶³²

From other accounts, emerges that also the respect of the proper ceremonial aspect of the ritual is fundamental for maintaining the authorization to perform the *vilavilairevo*. In one occasion, while I was working on my laptop after lunch, I casually pulled up a picture—probably sent back to the village in gratitude—which I had re-photographed in Soliyaga, portraying an Australian tourist walking barefoot in his cargo shorts on the *lovo* during a show of Soliyaga’s group for the nearby Lalati Resort and Spa. The picture immediately got Samu’s attention, who told me that this was “very bad” and that he was going to talk to his “grandfather”—the *bete levu* Sevanaia Waqasaqa—about it. Samu believed that having such images going around the world, tourists might change

⁶³¹ See Chapter 2,3.

⁶³² Interview Jan. 24 2005 h. 17:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

their understanding about the ‘authenticity’ and rigor the ceremony has maintained through the centuries.⁶³³ It turned out that the *bete* who ‘authorized’ the adventuresome tourist was Anare Veilawa, son of Timoci Tabanuqa, a *bete* from Soliyaga. When I talked to Timoci he observed:

I don’t know his [the tourist’s] name... he asked permission from my son who was the *bete* that day. I told my son not to repeat it again since this is our cultural property. It looks odd for a white guy without proper costumes firewalking even though the white guy walked and never got burnt. But that has depicted a bad image, globally, with regards to our culture and traditions. (Tabanuqa pers. comm.)⁶³⁴

In several occasions the issue of inappropriate behavior associated to *vilavilairevo* re-merged in the discussions about the progression, Yanuca’s *vilavilairevo* had from the 1970s till today (see Chapter 5). In particular its spectacularization and glamorization for the entertainment of the tourists. Samu one time told me that back in 1976 he remembers he traveled to Yanuca to warn his brother, Jiu Tikina, and his group, not to ‘seat’ on the *lovo* and refrain from other circus performances, such as wielding red-hot stones, placing slippers, paper, or meat on the *lovo* to demonstrate its heat. In the same occasion, Samu told me that the *bete levu* concerns are brought to the attention of the Tui Sawau, who has the authority to stop these performances that tend to ridicule the Sawau’s gift.⁶³⁵

In a different context, the issue of Samu’s illegitimate son Tikiko Korocawiri, discussed in Chapter 3 and 5, represents a similar case. Despite the

⁶³³ Interview Dec. 5 2004 h.14:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

⁶³⁴ Interview Dec. 1 2004 h.10:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

⁶³⁵ Interview Jan. 21 2005 h. 17:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa. The story was repeated on May 23 2005 h.17:00, by his eldest sister, Salanieta Davutu, at that time working in Yanuca as a teacher.

fact that Tikiko undoubtedly shares the same ‘gift’ by lineage, apparently he has never asked formal authorization from either the Tui Sawau or the *bete levu* to perform the *vilavilairovo*. His impromptu random performances, deprived of the traditional aspect, costumes etc., have been occasionally reported to the Sawau elders, who reprehend his conduct and send him messages through his relatives.

In one case Marika told me that his ‘brother’⁶³⁶ Tikiko called him from Nadi, asking him to help in a *vilavilairovo* performance at the First Landing Beach Resort and Villas of Vuda Point in Lautoka, begging that that was the last time. Marika refused, responding that the elders have no desire to see him again and that they know what he is doing around Fiji.⁶³⁷ Moreover, when Marika noticed that I had included Tikiko in my reconstruction of the Naivilaqata’s *mataqali* genealogy, he insisted that I had him removed from the family tree.⁶³⁸ Samu, on his side, always denied that Tikiko is his son and several times assured me that he has no idea who placed Tikiko name next to his in the *Vola ni Kawa Bula*. His *tavale* (cross-cousin) Waisake Ratulolo, who had recently run into him, explained to me that Tikiko is at this point an outsider, who performs the *vilavilairovo* maybe three, four times a year around Viti Levu, for his own personal benefit, for he does not belong anymore to any *koro* (village) in Fiji.⁶³⁹

More problematic is the situation of inappropriate behavior in the context of *vilavilairovo*, when the group performing has no direct kinship ties with the Sawau, and does not seek the assent of the Tui Sawau, or the consent of the elder

⁶³⁶ Marika and Tikiko are *veitacini*, parallel cousins.

⁶³⁷ Marika Tivitivi pers. comm. Mar. 18, 2005, h.19:00 at The Fijian Hotel, Viti Levu.

⁶³⁸ Marika Tivitivi pers. comm. Dec. 30, 2004, h. 11:30, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

⁶³⁹ Waisake Ratulolo pers. comm. Jan. 21, 2005, h.13:30, Dakuni, Beqa.

bete in Dakuibeqa. Besides the examples previously outlined (Chapter 5) of simulated and spurious *vilavilatrevo* ceremonies, the major case of abuse and misuse is offered by the ‘Wainiyabia group’ composed by members of other *mataqali* from villages outside Beqa, Yanuca and Lepanoni. Led by Semi Tavailagi, they perform every week for the tourists visiting the renovated Arts Village in Pacific Harbour,⁶⁴⁰ whose spectacularization and vulgarization of the ceremony for the benefit of their mass audience has already been discussed in Chapter 3 and 5. The news of their ‘constitution’ and participation in the Arts Village’s show arrived in Dakuibeqa in early May 2005, and was a matter of discussion and concerns on several occasions, particularly in kava sessions in the *vale levu* in the presence of the Tui Sawau.

Salanieta Davutu, Samu’s eldest sister, whose husband Josua Alavatu is from the coastal village of Navutulevu, was among the first in Dakuibeqa to express her concerns, for several members come from her husband’s village:

I want to see Semi [Tavailagi], if you meet Semi tell him I want to see him. I want to talk to him... I asked around in Navutulevu and they said Semi, he is running the fire walking, and I told them I want to see Semi, because Semi does not know the outcome of that. If something goes wrong, who will get the blame is our tribe. Can you imagine the title on the newspaper? “Beqa firewalkers got burned!” (Davutu pers. comm.)⁶⁴¹

The point here is clearly the potential indirect detriment that a ‘failed’ *vilavilatrevo* ceremony performed by unauthorized groups in front of a tourist audience could bring to the whole Sawau *yavusa*. When I talked to Semi Tavailagi, he immediately reacted saying that “he hasn’t anything to do with this

⁶⁴⁰ Former Pacific Harbour Cultural Centre.

⁶⁴¹ Salanieta Davutu pers. comm. May 23, 2005, h. 17:00, Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

[*vilavilarevo*]” and that he is “the first not wanting bad things happening”. Semi, at that time was thinking to perform an *isoro* (atonement) to avoid “problems in the future”. He told me that he wished he could have at least some firewalkers from Yanuca involved, maybe Lote, Samu’s brother, with whom he was performing the *vilavilarevo* at the time I met him the first time in July 2002, before relocating to Wainiyabia.⁶⁴²

Customary rules, respect and taboo seem the way the Sawau tribe has been able to maintain the custody of their customary ‘gift’ in Fiji. If the food is not properly cooking in a *lovo*, Fijians from other villages outside Beqa blame the Beqans, believing that somebody has joked about or questioned Sawau tribe’s ‘gift’ of walking on the hot stones, or that some member of the Sawau tribe is nearby, for the *veli* (elves) protecting them are always curious about any burning fire...

“Na vanua taucoko e dau kuvu kina na buka keimami dau raica se buka ni cava. Ke buka ni Vilavilarevo keimami na tiko kina. Ia mo nanuma sara, sa vakarau me daru veitalatala, na nomu kawa taucoko sara era na rawa ni vakayacora na Vilavilarevo me tekivu ni kua ka yacova na tavuki ni vuravura.” Rau sa qai lululu na veitau ka veivakamocetaki. Me yacova na siga ni kua sa dei tu ga na isolisoli levu ogo.

“Every time we see some smoke from a fire, we try to detect its purpose. If the burning of firewood is meant for *vilavilarevo* we stick to it. But, please do remember now that we are about to part, all your descendants from now on till the end of the world, they will have the skills to perform the *vilavilarevo*.” The two friends then shook hands and parted. From that day until now, the gift still exists. (Kuruiwaca pers. comm.)⁶⁴³

⁶⁴² Interview May 19 2005 h. 12:00, Arts Village, Pacific Harbour.

⁶⁴³ Interview Dec. 1 2004 h.12:00 Naceva, Beqa. Apenisa Kuruiwaca’s narrative of the recommendation from the elf (disguised as an eel) to Tui Qalita (Sawau ancestor) when the gift exchange took place upstream Namoliwai in Beqa. See Appendix G for the complete narrative.

It is through these ‘traditional cultural policies’, Lindstrom observes, that in Melanesia “only those people who possess a copyright can talk publicly with legitimacy about the knowledge in question... Rights to produce and talk about genealogy, secret clan names, magical spells and medical therapies, ritual practices... pass down within lineages.” (Lindstrom 1992: 69). In the case of *vilavilairevo* we can talk of an exclusive right and conversely of a *tabu* (taboo). *Tabu* is a pan-Pacific cultural practice of prohibition upon specific forms of social relations, often turned into legal provisions or even codified law.

Lambek (1992) observes that taboos are acts of separation, they serve as boundaries, spatial and temporal boundaries between or within persons and groups. Taboos are a social obligation that “creates social continuity” (Van Genep 1904: 27). *Tabu* in Fijian implies something forbidden, sacred, unapproachable or superlative, a religious or customary sanction, or a legal prohibition.⁶⁴⁴ The *tabu* on *vilavilairevo* has been hardly infringed and its consequential exclusive right almost never bestowed to any body else outside the Sawau tribe until the mid 1970s.⁶⁴⁵

Fijians are respectful of customary laws, hence of the capacity of this unique ritual performance to represent both the Sawau’s identity and supernatural force. However, cases of appropriation, abuse and misuse of the Sawau cultural property are recently testing the traditional cultural policies with those of the rampant global economy. There is a further issue. Customary law protection relies

⁶⁴⁴ Capell 1941.

⁶⁴⁵ The *bete levu* Semi Raikadra and the Naivilaqata clan members gave permission to Apenisa Kuruiwaca (*vasu levu* to the *vilavilairevo* through his mother from Dakuibeqa) to start a new group (see Chapter 3).

on norms and sanctions that seem to make sense only to members of ethnic groups. Within these groups there is a pressure to recognize and respect the rights and privileges associated with traditional cultural practices in the common interest of the members of the community. Nevertheless, since many of the individuals behind the unauthorized use of traditional cultural expressions are outside the relevant community, or foreigners,⁶⁴⁶ they may not have the incentive to respect those norms, the fear of taboos and *lex talionis* as factors in securing compliance is nonexistent due to the chiefs and elders' lack of jurisdiction, and the lack of common, communal and ritual interests. (Kuruk 2002: 19-20).

The recent Wainiyabia group's appropriation represents a clear case of infringement of the *tabu* protecting the *vilavilairevo*, whose consequences are unprecedented. Previously,⁶⁴⁷ I presented the case of the right of performing the *vilavilairevo* having been bestowed to somebody outside the tribe and the island of Beqa. In a macabre reversal of the original myth,⁶⁴⁸ the 'gift' was passed as the result of an extortion machinated through witchcraft (*vakacuru*) in exchange for a Sawau member's life.

Since the mid 1970s, *vilavilairevo* has become the signature 'brand' statement of Fijian culture. Tourism and media are just two of the more prominent forces that shape ritual performance today, influencing particularly the ways in which ritual traditions are reproduced and reinvented in contemporary Fiji. Simulated and spurious *vilavilairevo* performances along with new forms of

⁶⁴⁶ This term is used broadly to refer to citizens who are not members of the particular ethnic group to which the rights connected to the traditional cultural expressions are applicable.

⁶⁴⁷ See Chapter 5 and the full story of Adi Lisitewa.

⁶⁴⁸ See Appendix G for the myth narrative.

appropriation are accompanying the tourism industry's rapid developments in Fiji and in Beqa. In such ritual performances, and in the organizational and discursive practices that support them, indigenous and globalized systems of identity, economics, law, and aesthetics are interacting in fast dialogic processes of reproduction and transformation.

The western concept of property treats culture as a possession, a commodity that can be transferred from one individual to another by means of commercial transaction (Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000: 26). Ownership assigns an absolute right over it, to preserve it and even to destroy it (Boydell and Shah 2003: 2). This notion of ownership is alien to the Sawau and to most traditional communities and should not be extended to their cultural heritage. Instead, they share a sense of collective responsibility, custodianship and identity towards their traditional cultural expressions philosophically vested in communalism. This responsibility is embedded in a continuing relationship between the people their *vanua* (land) and other traditional and cultural resources, thus it is inconceivable that an expression of their collective identity could be permanently or completely alienated. The land, like the *vilavilavevo*, is a 'gift' that ultimately belongs to God.⁶⁴⁹ Boydell and Shah argue that in order to understand Fijian communalism, we have to acknowledge the concept *NoqoKalou*, *NoqoVanua* (my God, my land), where communalism becomes a form of stewardship, custodianship, associated to an enduring sense of place and relationship to the village.

⁶⁴⁹ As previously outlined in Chapter 4, the concept of a Christian God has intertwined with the traditional beliefs that saw the gift belonging to the Tui Namoliwai and the *veli* (elves) inhabiting the upper Namoliwai river region.

The land, like the *vilavilavirevo* is given them to be held in trust for future generations. Among others, Ezigbalike and Benwell (1994) observe that this stewardship is intertwined with mythological and kinship relationship, law and community custodial responsibilities. In an essay entitled *Ritual as Intellectual Property*, Harrison notes a critical difference in rationale between western concepts of property and Melanesian ideas about the ownership of intangibles: a difference which echoes the distinction between commodities and gifts (Harrison 1992: 234-5).

Hence, whereas western intellectual property seeks to define products of human creativity that can be alienated from their creators or exchanged for other commodities, in Melanesia, in Fiji and in Beqa among the Sawau, the ownership of intangibles does not include the possibility of alienation, for “property is actually a form of sociality” (Harrison *ibid.*). Paradoxically, taking the Maussian model to its limit, the gift is antagonistic to the commodity (Gregory 1982). What distinguishes commodity from gift exchange is the conceptualization of kinship as a method of consumption (Gregory 1982: 212). In the Sawau case, on the one hand, this gift ‘exchange’ has become subjective and dependent on its commodification, objectifying the gift for the tourists.

On the other hand, as exemplified in Chapter 3, it is clearly creating relations between subjects exchanging aspects of themselves, when the ‘gift’ is passed down within lineage (*itokatoka* Naivilaqata, *mataqali* Naivilaqata) and to other Sawau members belonging to the other *mataqali*. As previously discussed, while the *itokatoka* Naivilaqata should be identified as the traditional ‘custodian’

and proprietary group of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony, their proprietary claim is not exclusive: kindred from other *itokatoka* and *mataqali* of the *yavusa* Sawau participate in the *vilavilairevo* performances and in the distribution of the earnings derived by those performance. However, despite the growing pirating attempts against the *vilavilairevo*, in contrast with the commodity, which can be alienated, annihilated, the cultural right which identifies the Sawau tribe, is an inalienable possession, yet to be eradicated.

Who is the Author? Individual versus Communal Property

In his causative essay, *What is the Author?* Foucault suggests that the key to understand the modern idea of ‘authorship’ is to examine the social and historical context in which it emerged. Foucault recognized that the author in the modern sense was not only a relatively new invention of social construction, but, more importantly, was a model that did not reflect or serve contemporary writing practices. Riley observes that challenging the assumptions that underlie western legal systems, Foucault asserted that authorship entitlements do not derive from natural law, but are direct reflections of society’s own determinations about the proper allocation of entitlements to ‘works’. Riley 2000: 183).

After Foucault, Riley observes that Kaplan’s (1967) seminal piece challenging further the ‘cult of originality’, a hallmark of the Romantic period, remains among the most prominent examples providing a theoretical basis for the ‘deconstruction of the romantic author’, which has remained at the core of the present copyright statutory system, regardless of its inconsistency with the modes of intellectual creativity that define the modern era. Deconstructing ‘authorship’, means moving beyond the notion of a

“privileged category of human enterprise” (Jaszi 1991: 455), and redefining the concept toward the goals of flexibility, fluidity and inclusion (Riley 2000: 184).

Jaszi and several other authors argue that indigenous conceptions of ownership, rights and values which inhere in cultural property suggest that the rationales which justify the current scope of copyright protection may not be applicable or relevant in indigenous communities (Jaszi 1991: 502). In a recent study on the protection of cultural property in Papua New Guinea, Strathern argues that intellectual property rights flourish in a social context energized by the relationship of national innovation to globalization (Strathern 2000: 49). More recently, Strathern and Hish have recently observed that:

A regime of intellectual property rights introduces the possibility that resources may be as intangible as ideas and names or could lie in any manifestation of distinctiveness. The question that continues to preoccupy many countries outside the industrial West is whether one can in fact apply intellectual property protection to the distinctive artifacts, performances and repository of wisdom that identify ‘a culture’. (2004: 3)

Intellectual property rights (IPRs)⁶⁵⁰ are individually owned (Palethorpe

⁶⁵⁰ Intellectual property rights refer to creations of the mind: inventions, literary and artistic works, and symbols, names, images, and designs used in commerce. Intellectual property is divided into two categories:

- a) Industrial property, which includes inventions (patents), trademarks, industrial designs, and geographic indications of source.
 - Trademarks protect the product identifiers—the names, logos and general visual attributes that distinguish a business from its competitors. The primary purpose of trademarking is to prevent consumer confusion over the origin of the products. Registration of generic names typically is not allowed, as that would prevent competitors from referring to their product by its proper name.
 - Patents are by far the most technically demanding branch of intellectual property. In basic terms, a patent is given to an inventor of some novel machine, process, or product that has utility to the public. The patent prevents anyone else from making, using or selling the invented device or process in the country where it is accorded
- b) Copyright, which includes literary and artistic works such as novels, poems and plays, films, musical works, artistic works such as drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures, and architectural designs. Rights related to copyright include those of performing artists in their performances, producers of phonograms in their recordings, and those of broadcasters in their radio and

& Verhulst 2000: 26). Intellectual property is a mental product sharing many characteristics of real and personal property, generally defined as property that is intangible or which has no physical form (Whimp and Busse 2000: 6). In other words, when protected by law, the intangible aspects of creations of the human mind constitute intellectual property (Scafidi 2001). Eurocentric law has been reluctant to recognize that rituals, stories, songs, personal names, artistic designs and specialist knowledge are among the intangibles to which indigenous communities, like the Sawau, not individuals, claim ownership. Harrison observes that such intangibles “presuppose a shared universe of information and meaning, and depend upon that universe not only for their value but for their very reality” (Harrison 1992: 235).

Traditional cultural expressions often are not created by a known person, and hence it is ascribed to a cultural or an ethnic community. It is in the nature of communal property to be enjoyed by any person belonging to the particular community (see Amegatcher 2002: 37). The individualistic nature of IPRs creates several complications when applied to local communities. Prakash, a Consultant for the Africa Region, World Bank, notes that they fail to take into account the

television programs. Copyrights protect the tangible expression of ideas. Common uses include protecting the contents of books, movie plots, paintings and sound recordings. Copyright protection attaches when the creator puts pen to paper and creates a tangible expression of the idea. Copyright does not cover: facts (such as a measurement); short phrases or words; ideas; processes (such as recipes and game rules); unfixed works (such as an improvisational theater performance or musical ‘jam session’ if it is not recorded). Unlike patents, copyrights arise spontaneously when the work has been created. No application or registration is necessary. Copyrights last for varying periods of time, depending upon the country and who the author is. In all *Berne Convention* member states. The term of the protection is the life of the author plus 50 years. Infringement of a copyright consists of: unauthorized reproduction; distribution; adaptation; public performance; public display.

fact that indigenous communities have a holistic approach to their environment (Prakash 2000: 2).

Another problem, previously discussed, is that in most traditional communities knowledge is acquired over time and passed on from one generation to the next. Through this process it keeps evolving and changing character. Therefore, it is difficult to establish *when* such knowledge was actually discovered and *when* it entered the public domain. In short, knowledge held and generated within ‘traditional societies’ can be new as well as old, consequently, this does not mean that each generation inherits exactly what it passes on, it develops incrementally with each generation (Dutfield 2003: 23). Dutfield observes that some indigenous community would actually consider it presumptuous to attribute authorship to a human being or a certain group of people. Darrell Posey⁶⁵¹ observes that “indigenous singers may attribute songs to the creator spirit, and elders may reserve the right to prohibit its performance, or to limit it to certain occasions and to restricted audiences” (Posey 1995: 13).

It emerges that IPRs are problematic for indigenous peoples for the following reasons:

a) They are intended to benefit society through the granting of exclusive rights to ‘natural’ and ‘juridical’ persons, or creative individuals, not collective entities such as indigenous peoples.⁶⁵²

⁶⁵¹ At the time of his death in 2001, Darrell Addison Posey, anthropologist and ethnobiologist, was director of the Programme for Traditional Resource Rights of the Oxford Centre for Environment, Ethics and Society at Mansfield College.

⁶⁵² As the Bellagio Declaration puts it: “Contemporary intellectual property law is constructed around a notion of the author as an individual, solitary and original creator, and it is for this figure that its protections are reserved. Those who do not fit in this model—custodians of tribal culture

- b) They cannot protect information that does not result from a specific historic act of ‘discovery’. As discussed above, indigenous knowledge is transgenerational and communally shared. Knowledge may come from an ancestor, spirits, vision quests, or orally-transmitted lineage groups. It is considered to be in the ‘public domain’ and therefore unprotectable.
- c) They serve to stimulate commercialization and distribution, whereas indigenous concerns may be primarily to prohibit commercialization and to restrict use and distribution.
- e) They recognize only market economic values, failing to consider spiritual, aesthetic or cultural—or even local economic—values. Information, objects, rituals, have their greatest value to indigenous peoples because of their ties with cultural identity and symbolic unity.
- f) They are subject to manipulation to economic interests that wield political power. Posey (1995) observes that *sui generis* protection has been obtained for ‘literary works’ generated by computers, whereas, indigenous peoples have insufficient power to protect even their more sacred plants, places, performances, artifacts
- g) They are expensive, complicated and time consuming to obtain, and even more difficult to defend (Posey 2002).

Indigenous peoples’ heritage is not a commodity, nor the property of the nation-state. The material and intellectual heritage of each indigenous people is a

and medical knowledge, collectives practicing traditional artistic and musical forms, or peasants cultivators and valuable seed varieties, for example—are denied intellectual property protection.” (The Bellagio Declaration for the 1993 Rockefeller Conference “Cultural Agency/Cultural Authority: Politics and Poetics of Intellectual Property in the Post-Colonial Era”, March 11 1993.)

sacred gift and a responsibility that must be honored and held for the benefit of future generations.

Why shouldn't IPRs Protect Cultural Property?

Before stepping into the complex issue of intellectual property rights, it is worth mentioning one minimized aspect of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, reviewed in the previous chapter. Although the Convention promotes inventories (Art. 12) maintaining a visible distance from the delicate issue of intellectual property rights (Art. 3(b)),⁶⁵³ Kurin suggests that some perceive in the treaty a means for nation-states to establish intellectual property rights in all sort of traditional cultural expressions (Kurin 2003: 9).

Given the intangible nature of much indigenous culture, intellectual property seemed, at first, the most promising avenue for the protection of indigenous cultural traditions against inappropriate use. Gervais argues that over the past few years, a significant amount of scholarly work, including major reports and meetings under the aegis of WIPO have dealt with the protection of traditional knowledge' and its relationship with intellectual property. However, he observes, "the subset of 'traditional knowledge'" consisting of sacred intangible knowledge has been the subject of less attention, in part because it is often less commercially compelling" (Gervais 2003: 494).

That said, according to a recent report from Gosselin there are three organizations which have responsibilities for intellectual property rights issues in the Pacific Islands

⁶⁵³ "Nothing in this Convention may be interpreted as affecting the rights and obligations of the States Parties deriving from any international instrument relating to intellectual property rights or to the use of biological and ecological resources to which they are parties" (Art. 3(b)).

region:

The Secretariat for the Pacific Communities (SPC). The regional intergovernmental development agency responsible for developing the technical, professional, scientific, research, planning and management capabilities of Pacific Island peoples and for directly providing information and advice to enable them to make informed choices about their future development and well-being.

The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The intergovernmental agency responsible for providing advice and assistance to Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) and coordinating the region's approach to a wide range of regional and international environmental issues.

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). The intergovernmental organization responsible for providing policy advice to the regional Heads of State and Government and members on political, international relations, legal, security, economic and trade issues. This mandate includes advice on IPR protection, covering two main aspects: core IPR issues (relating to patents, trademarks, copyright etc) and indigenous IPR or traditional knowledge. The PIFS co-operates closely with the SPC on issues relating to traditional knowledge (TK) and expressions of culture (EC), and with SPREP on issues relating to traditional biological knowledge, innovations and practices. At the same time, it must be said that, because of serious resource constraints within each of those organisations, only one or two officers in each have been formally charged with IPR responsibilities, and those are often, if not always, carried out along with other duties. (Gosselin 2004: 1)

According to Forsyth (2003), in the South Pacific there are three problem areas that intellectual property is being called upon to solve. Firstly, the region's lack of development of new technologies and economic advancement. More protection would increase foreign investments and stimulate growth, promote quality of products and create employment. UNESCO has been encouraging governments to adopt measures and prepare legislation and enactment policies to promote creativity and increase the production of literacy, scientific and artistic works, reducing dependence to foreign sources. Secondly, the protection of genetic resources. Many plants used by indigenous populations for centuries has led multinational drug companies to come to the region looking for resources from which to manufacture new drugs and conduct experiments.

These drugs are often patented outside the territory with no benefits being returned to the indigenous populations. The best example is the kava plant, whose medicinal and sedative properties show a growing number of kava-based preparations in the US and Europe, some of which have been patented. Thirdly, the increasing exploitation and inappropriate commercialization of the traditional knowledge and expressions of culture. For example, she reports there are concerns in the Cook Islands that entrepreneurs in Hawai‘i are profiting by marketing elements of Cook Islands Culture, including drumbeats, dances and songs.⁶⁵⁴

Palethorpe & Verhulst in their recent Report on the International Protection of Expressions of Folklore Under Intellectual Property Law, commissioned by the European Commission, write that:

Copyright provides protection for creative expression for, *inter alia*, literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works. These categories are typically non-exhaustive and broadly interpreted to allow for flexibility in categorisation of copyrightable subject matter. Therefore, since expressions of folklore like folk tales, folk dances, folk music and folk art and crafts, fall broadly into the above categories of copyrightable subject matter, folklore as such, is not precluded from copyright protection. (Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000: 28)

Among the intellectual property rights capable of being applied at national level as means of providing protection for traditional cultural expressions, copyright is the main right concerned, although we will see later that industrial property may also come into question. The Fiji Copyright Act contains only one reference to ‘folklore’:

“Public performance” means:

⁶⁵⁴ “Politicians Hold Key To Rescuing Cooks Islands? Culture?” in *Cook Islands News*, August 21, 2001.

in the case of a work other than an audiovisual work- reciting, playing, dancing, acting or otherwise performing the work (which term includes an expression of folklore) either directly or by means of any device or process.⁶⁵⁵

The copyright doctrine however presents a myriad of obstacles to the full protection of indigenous expressions of culture. The first problem is the term of the protection. In all Berne Convention member states,⁶⁵⁶ the term of the protection is the life of the author plus fifty years. Thus, in addition to the problem of identifying a particular author, the more significant problem among indigenous communities is that the term is insufficient. Farley (1997) observes that many indigenous rights advocates argue that perpetual protection should be granted to traditional expressions of culture because “the protection of the expressions of folklore is not for the benefit of individual creators, but a community whose existence is not limited in time.”⁶⁵⁷ A limited term of protection means that most indigenous cultural expressions and works may be in the public domain. All expressions and works whose term has expired are in the public domain, regardless that their forms and symbols date back to the ‘dreamtime’ or creation.

If a work is in the public domain anyone is free to reproduce it. Farley suggests that the copyright law should be reformulated so that “(1) the protection is retroactive for all works of indigenous folklore, and (2) protection is perpetual.” (Farley 1997: 18). The first problem in order to reformulate the law specifically to

⁶⁵⁵ Fiji Copyright Act 1999, Part I.

⁶⁵⁶ Fiji’s became party to the Convention on December 1, 1971, date on which the declaration of continued adherence was sent, after the accession of the State to independence.

⁶⁵⁷ *Model Provisions for National Laws on the Protection of Expressions of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and Other Prejudicial Actions* (UNESCO-WIPO, 1985), at 22.

‘folklore’ or ‘traditional expressions of culture’ is finding a way to define them as previously discussed, in order to limit any amendment to these specific works.

The second problem is that in some countries such an ‘extension’ of these rights may be unconstitutional, running the risk of limiting speech and inhibiting innovation (Farley *ibid.*).

The second barrier to the protection of expressions of culture via copyright is that copyright law requires a work to be original.⁶⁵⁸ As most indigenous cultural expressions, like the *vilavilarevo*, although entirely ‘new’ are most often directly derived from preexisting traditions and works over time, it is arguable that the condition of originality cannot be satisfied. The aim of having the originality element is to avoid others exploiting the creator’s work. The indigenous world-view would find such a requirement irrelevant, for those expressions are the ‘property’ of the whole community regardless who created them. Nevertheless, in the *Milpurrruru v. Indofurn Pty. Ltd.* case,⁶⁵⁹ which concerned the reproduction of famous Aboriginal works of art on carpets manufactured in Vietnam, the plaintiffs were able to satisfy the originality requirement. In short, were those designs original work of authorship? The judge held that that the works in question were

⁶⁵⁸ Fiji Copyright Act 1999 Part II, Art. 14(1):

“Copyright is a property right that exists in accordance with this Act in original works of the following descriptions:

- (a) literary , dramatic, musical, or artistic works;
- (b) sound recordings;
- (c) audio visual works;
- (d) broadcasts;
- (e) cable programmes;
- (f) typographical arrangements of published editions.

⁶⁵⁹ (1994) 30 IPR 209.

without doubt original.⁶⁶⁰

In conclusion on the problem of originality, it can thus be maintained that, although many traditional cultural expressions, due to their excessive resemblance to works already existing, are insufficiently original to enjoy copyright protection, many works inspired by those expressions and created by individual artists are, on the other hand, capable of being protected on the basis of the regulations concerning derived works. (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 294). In other words, even if a work is based on traditional design or motif, it will still be protected by copyright provided that the artist has added something original (Blain and De Silva 1991: 5).

These are also called ‘thin’ copyrights, for the crucial problem is that if the work is based only on the variation on a preexisting work, only the ‘variation’ from that work is protectable. That is, the underlying work may be in the public domain and it is only what the artist adds, that would be protected. Thus, what concerns indigenous communities is that an outsider could still use the underlying cultural and artistic expressions without their authorization.

Indigenous authors have argued that the fixation requirement is another

⁶⁶⁰ “Although the artworks follow traditional Aboriginal forms and are based on dreaming themes, each artwork is one of intricate detail and complexity reflecting great skill and originality” (*Milpurrurru v. Indofurn Pty. Ltd.*, 30 IPR (1994) 209, 216). More importantly, in this case customary Aboriginal laws were taken into account in quantifying the damages, which had been suffered. This decision demonstrated a sensitive and flexible approach of the court: exemplary damages were awarded for culturally based harm, the court acknowledging cultural sensitivity; the Aboriginal custom of not using the names of deceased artists was respected; lump-sum damages were awarded to enable Aboriginal clans to take account of collective ownership of the designs; additional damages were also awarded for humiliation or insulting behavior to a particular cultural group (Puri 2001: 3).

barrier to the protection of their traditional cultural expression.⁶⁶¹ Copyright law (*corpus mysticum*) usually requires that an expression be fixed in a tangible medium (*corpus mechanicum*). Often, these expressions will not be able to meet this requirement because some art forms, like dances and performances, may never be fixed. They are passed down transgenerationally through memorization, but may never be recorded on a tangible form. In Farley's words, "traditional cultural expressions are the antithesis of recorded culture" (Farley 1997: 28).

Often, it may be an outsider who first fixes an indigenous work in a tangible medium—a documentary film maker who videotapes a ritual, a researcher who jots down the steps of a dance, or a musician who writes down the words or notes of a song for the first time. These persons, however, are *not* the authors, and therefore not the initial copyright owners, they are just 'stenographers'. That is, the film-documentary maker is the author of the film, not of the underlying dances or music captured on camera.

The recent *Consolidated Analysis of the Legal Protection of Traditional Cultural Expressions/Expressions of Folklore* (2003), published by WIPO, among several examples of appropriation and misappropriation,⁶⁶² suggests that the recording or adaptation and public performance of indigenous stories, plays and dances, along with the photographing of live performances and the subsequent reproduction and publication of the photographs on CDs, tape cassettes, postcards

⁶⁶¹ This argument only concerns the copyright law systems of common law countries, like the United Kingdom, the United States and Fiji. "In general, civil law countries do not require that a work be fixed in a material form in order to receive protection by author's right countries" (Sterling 1999: 247).

⁶⁶² Traditional body and rock painting; traditional songs and music; oral indigenous traditional stories and poetry; designs embodied in hand-woven or hand-made textiles and tapestries; indigenous words. (WIPO, Background Paper No.1, 2003: 31-2).

and on the Internet has raised questions about the protection of the rights of the indigenous communities in these expressions of their culture.

Farley notes that the lack of fixation, may actually provide more protection to indigenous works, for if a work is unfixed the protection does not commence until it becomes fixed (Farley 1997: 29). However, an unfixed work is not subject to copyright law and is therefore not protected. Moreover, a fixed work that is derived from an unfixed work, but which demonstrates substantial variation, will be able to be copyrighted, thus an outsider may profit by adapting an unfixed song, dance or performance and copyrighting it. The argument is that the majority of these expressions that are the subject matter of commercial exploitation are in any event fixed, thus Riley argues that “denying copyright protection to works not ‘fixed in a tangible medium’ results in the devastating exclusion of an entire realm of indigenous creations, as the use of the oral tradition spans almost every Native community in existence” (Riley 2000: 195).

The fourth problem for the application of copyright to traditional cultural expressions is the most fundamental, as seen in the previous section. An indigenous cultural expression is not thought to be owned by the particular artist who created it, for it is seen as the property of the group or clan, and most artwork, like the *vilavilairevo* is actually executed by a group. In the case of dances, and ritual performances, the making of art is a group process in which many people participate at various levels. The Australian case *Yumbulul v. Reserve Bank of Australia* shows how the individualistic tendency of copyright law causes problems for the indigenous peoples.

In this case, Aboriginal artist Terry Yumbulul, sued the Reserve Bank of Australia because it had used the image of his sculpture on a new Australian ten dollar note issued to commemorate the bicentennial of the European settlement of Australia.⁶⁶³ The Bank claimed that the artist, who, significantly, had a valid copyright, licensed the Bank to use the image. The artist claimed that he did not have the authority to grant such a license as approval was also required, under Aboriginal customs, from the elders of the Galpu clan, to whom the motif belongs⁶⁶⁴.

Under customary law, the right to depict a design does not mean that the artist may permit its reproduction. Under customary laws, artworks are subject to layers of rights and many individuals may need to grant their permission. On the other hand, the *Milpururru* and the *Yumbulul* case announce that the protection of copyright adheres when artists claim for themselves the rights to their creations. Farley (1997) observes that such an approach will force indigenous people to translate their expressions into the language of individualism.

Farley (ibid.) suggests three mechanisms in copyright law to overcome the problem: joint authorship, the transfer of rights and the work-made-for-hire provision. In the first case, disciplined also by the Fiji Copyright Act, in order to prove joint authorship “the work must be produced by the collaboration of 2 or more authors in which the contribution of each author is not distinct from that of

⁶⁶³ The sculpture represented a ‘Morning Star Pole’, which have a central role in ceremonies commemorating deaths of important members of the clan (Galpu clan) (Blakeney 1995: 442).

⁶⁶⁴ Apparently, Yumbulul was authorized by his clan to make this Morning Star Pole for educational purposes, and apparently the Aboriginal Artists Agency had Yumbulul sign a blanket license. (Price and Price 1996: 20).

the other author or authors”⁶⁶⁵, in other words, the joint authors must in fact collaborate equally in the work preparation, thus only certain clan members would be recognized as such. The second option is the transfer of rights, that is the individual artist may transfer his or her rights to the clan elders or to the clan as a corporate entity, but especially in the Fijian case, it is arguable that it may result in problems for clans to have individuals initially have this authority over them.

Some copyright laws permit corporate entities to claim authorship rights when they are the employer for whom the works has been prepared. Under the Fiji Copyright Act “if an employee makes, in the course of his or her employment, a literary, dramatic, ⁶⁶⁶musical, or artistic work, that person's employer is the first owner of any copyright in the work.”⁶⁶⁷. The difficulty here is that the artists are not strictly thought of as the ‘employees’ of the clan elders. It also not clear how courts will view the relationship between indigenous artists and their tribes. The only factor that would clearly favor this is that clan elders often exercise a high degree of control over the execution of the work.

As for the third option, there are other forms of intellectual property rights which may provide a scheme of protection for contemporary tradition-based cultural expressions.

Trade mark law is an area of intellectual property law which may be relevant for the protection of traditional expressions of culture. Trade marks are

⁶⁶⁵ Fiji Copyright Act 1999, 6(1).

⁶⁶⁶ Even if this is not an intellectual property ‘right’ *strictu sensu*, it can be studied within the present framework since the actions that are a matter for unfair competition are frequently dealt with together with intellectual property rights.

⁶⁶⁷ Fiji Copyright Act 1999, 21(2).

words, names, symbols, and other distinctive signs⁶⁶⁸ to identify goods and services and to distinguish them from goods manufactured and sold by others. However, it has been argued (*inter alia* Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000; Lucas Shloetter 2004) that in practice, the application of trade mark law to traditional cultural expressions may be restricted by the hesitation of the members of the community concerned to seek the registration of trade marks in products and services unrelated to the general area of their traditional activity, for example products such as motor vehicles and football mascots.⁶⁶⁹

Therefore, the trade mark regime does not allow traditional communities to prevent the wholesale and inappropriate use of their names, words, symbols (Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000: 33). Even if the registration is made, the trade mark would in any event only have effect in the sector of activity concerned. In addition, such protection, would not benefit the community concerned, but rather any person who has made the registration (see Nordmann 2001: 168, quoted in Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 307).

Leighton Chong, argues that “trade marks are add-ons, they don’t change the traditional values, they are add-ons in terms of education, and enhancing the enjoyment, appreciation of art. They won’t stop the cheap fakes, but they will point out that they *are* cheap fakes” (Chong pers. comm.⁶⁷⁰). Nevertheless, Janke

⁶⁶⁸ Such signs may consist of, among others any letter, word, name, signature, logo, numeral, drawing, device brand, heading, label, ticket, color, shape, sound or scent of products. (WIPO Background Paper No.1, 2003: 45, Janke 2003: 29).

⁶⁶⁹ Traditional names like Cherokee, Tuareg, Crazy Horse, Navajo and Sioux etc.

⁶⁷⁰ Leighton Chong is an intellectual property attorney, who has organized the first “Hawai‘i Intellectual Property Licensing Conference” in April 2005 and participated at the “Native Hawaiian Cultural Trademark Conference” I attended at UHM Richardson School of Law on July 29, 2006.

observes that while copyright and patents have limited terms of protection after which the material falls into the public domain, the continuous protection provided by the trade mark may allow greater scope for indigenous peoples to protect the words, symbols and designs within their traditional knowledge and culture (Janke 2003: 30).

On June 2005, Felix Colatanavanua and I attended the “National Workshop on the Protection of Genetic Resources and Cultural Heritage of Fiji”, organized by the WWF South Pacific Programme and the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Department of Culture and Heritage. The aim of the two-day workshop was to bring together key organizations within culture and environment sectors in order to draft a Framework for Action on legislative issues of cultural heritage and genetic resources.

One of the panelists was with the licensing division of the Office of the Attorney General in charge of Trade Marks.⁶⁷¹ Felix’s uncle, the Tui Sawau, during our conversations had expressed some concerns about “usage of names unique to our *vanua*” (*ni kena vakayagataki na veiyaca e kilai kina na neitou vanua*) (Tui Sawau pers. comm.)⁶⁷² after a resort on Beqa changed hands and adopted the signature name of of Beqa Lagoon,⁶⁷³ without the prior consent of the *vanua*. From the conversation it emerged that a possible protection for the Beqa’s firewalkers, whose name was used and abused by unauthorized, groups, hotels, and in tourists’ brochures, guides, and other airport amenities, was to obtain a

⁶⁷¹ Fiji Trade Mark Act, 1970. In Fiji both the Attorney General’s Office and the Ministry of Justice (Honorable Mr. Qoriniasi Bale) enforce intellectual property legislation.

⁶⁷² Interview Apr. 30 2005 h.15:00, Samabula.

⁶⁷³ formerly known as Marlin Bay Resort.

trade mark on “*vilavilairevo*”, “Beqa firewalking”, “Beqa firewalkers” and similar.

It also emerged that while the common law trade mark is seen of relative value as a means of protecting indigenous expressions of culture, two specific institutions, on the other hand, are capable of playing an important role in this sector: the collective trade mark and the certification mark.

Collective trade marks mainly serve to distinguish products of services of the members of the association that is the holder. Therefore, “the founding of associations within traditional communities could enable the use of collective marks to authenticate folkloric products and assist consumers in identifying genuine folkloric products” (Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000: 33). However, the collective trade mark is only appropriate if the aim is to show that the products have been made by indigenous persons who are members of an association of traditional industry, and not where it is a case of promoting their cultural integrity (Janke 1998 quoted in Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 308).

Certification marks serve to indicate and guarantee that the product or service it marks has specific characteristics. They typically cover geographic origin, quality of materials used, and mode of manufacture. In sum, they could be applied to folkloric products to indicate, for example, that the goods are manufactured in accordance with traditional practices and beliefs (Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000: 33). In Australia, the idea of a national indigenous mark of authenticity has been the subject of discussions since the 1980s (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 308). Janke observes that:

The purpose of the Mark would be to identify the quality of having been created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people [...] The degree of protection that the Mark offers would only be to the extent of the fraudulent use of the Mark. However, the positive effect as a marketing tool is potentially of immense value. (Janke 1997: 23)

Janke's observation brings back the discussion of repatriation of the *vilavilarevo* to Beqa, in conjunction with the prospected hypothesis of a forthcoming ecotourism operation run by the Sawau community in the main Sawau villages.⁶⁷⁴ Building on Annas (1997), such certification would represent a means of marketing advantage in an environment where there is an increasing number of cultural products which are 'indigenous' in appearance and are not 'authentic' or worse, have a non-indigenous origin. The goods protected may include a wide range of products such as mats, fabrics, nets, seed and shell necklaces, carved objects and musical recordings. The services protected may include activities such as theater, dance, performances, concerts, educational and tourism programs (Wiseman 2001). Annas observes that in Canada in the 1970s, the government encouraged Inuit artists to organize community cooperatives to adopt distinctive trade marks for Inuit products and to ensure their authenticity (Annas 1997: 5).

In New Zealand, the Maori Arts Board, *Te Waqa Toi*, is making use of the trademark protection through the development of the *Toi Iho*TM Maori Trade Mark.⁶⁷⁵ The mark is certification trademark denoting authenticity and quality, widely applied. Janke reports that trademarks may be useful for indigenous people

⁶⁷⁴ See Chapter 5.

⁶⁷⁵ Similar statutory provisions comprising a national labeling system i.e., 'Label of Authenticity' are currently under evaluation in Fiji.

to protect their trade interests. She notes that certification marks have been registered or least applied for by indigenous Australians in respect of cultural festivals, soaps, perfumery, essential oils, body lotions and other natural resource products, arts centers, clothing and textiles, music, film and broadcasting, publications, and Internet-related services. However, she observes that many applications do not proceed to registration “it is hypothesized that this is because often the proposed trade mark consists entirely of words that are purely descriptive [...] On receipt of an adverse report, the Indigenous application often does not reply to clarify the application. [...] However, there is strong evidence that indigenous use of the trade marks system is increasing.” (Janke 2003: 43). She concludes her report asking the question: can indigenous peoples use trade marks to stop non-indigenous business using cultural material as trade marks?⁶⁷⁶

The problem, Janke observes, is although it would be possible, they would have to register the word, symbol, a clan, or a language group name, in all 42 classes. However, as Maui Solomon has recently explained to the Hawaiians,⁶⁷⁷ this would be costly, difficult to enforce and should only be allowed with the prior informed consent of the particular indigenous community. In the case of the Sawau tribe, the Tui Sawau could register trade marks rights and hold them in trust on behalf of the Sawau tribe. However, practical obstacles remain, such as the application of renewal fees, and a general lack of awareness of the law and its possibilities among indigenous and traditional communities, especially as regards

⁶⁷⁶ For a full report see WIPO *Case Studies on Intellectual Property and Traditional Cultural Expressions*, Study No. 1, 2003.

⁶⁷⁷ “Native Hawaiian Cultural Trademark Conference” I attended at UHM Richardson School of Law on July 29, 2006.

opposition and invalidation/opposition proceedings.

Geographical indications is defined in Article 22.1 of the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Agreement (TRIPS)⁶⁷⁸ as an indication which identifies a good as originating in the territory of a Member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin. Unlike the certification mark, which belongs to an association, the geographical indication is a collective right, a specific form of industrial property, and belongs to all producers of the product in question in the designated geographical area, and not to a specific legal person, whether natural or corporate, thus it establishes a collective exclusivity for the use of names and goods originating from a specific geographical territory.

In practice, the geographical indication can either be claimed by traditional communities originating from the geographical area in question or it can be opposed by the same communities when third parties made unlawful use of it. Janke (1998) observes that it might be a false geographical indication to use an indigenous language word or design for a product that is produced outside that country without the involvement of that particular language community. Given that indigenous peoples' cultural expressions reflect their belonging to land and territories, this may allow some scope for indigenous people to use geographical

⁶⁷⁸ Discussed in the next section, the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement, 1995) was introduced as the most ambitious multilateral agreement ever made in the area of intellectual property. The TRIPS Agreement establishes minimum standards for the protection of intellectual property. State Members are free to introduce systems of protection not referred to in the Agreement, for example the protection of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions of indigenous communities which are not contemplated in the Agreement
Fiji is a member and signatory of the TRIPS Agreement since January 1996.

indications for their clan names, and language words for regions and localities (Janke 2003: 36).

According to Lucas-Schloetter (2004), the recourse to geographical indications as a means of guaranteeing the authenticity of the manifestations of folklore appears entirely satisfactory. Palethorpe & Verhulst (2000) note that geographical indications have the potential to promote the authentication of genuine folkloric products by permitting the use of particular names to indicate a product originating from a region or a particular traditional community.

Lindstrom (2007) has recently argued that the Vanuatu Kava Act of 2002 hoped to capture some of the recreational market for kava by requiring producers to label the place of origin and the recognized local variety of each kava plant sold, to highlight the 'noble' variety of kava. The model here is wine and also coffee. Although multinational corporations might sell their kava-based concoction without acknowledging kava's Pacific origins or paying royalties to the island communities that originally developed the drug, these communities could still maintain monopolies on high prestige kava varieties sold in the recreational marketplace. Lindstrom (ibid.) gives the example of the fine Pentecost brew that reflects the fine soils of this island and can grow nowhere else, or the kava *Pwia*, a noble variety only available from Tanna island.

Felix Colatanavanua in fact, considered that Beqa's renowned strong kava, competing in the local market only with the popular Kandavu's variety, could be easily marketed if branding it with its unique *vilavilairevo* symbolic association. However, the enforcement of such protection requires the existence of regional

associations of indigenous people with legal capacity, based on an administrative act (for example, the certification of a particular region), or from a private initiative (for example the registration of collective marks and certification marks).

It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the patents of invention, for the discussion of their role focuses more on the question of how traditional knowledge-related inventions could be excluded from an excessively strong patent protection, than on the protection possibilities which patent law offers (Leistner 2004: 65; Dutfield 2000: 19).⁶⁷⁹ WIPO's *Consolidated Analysis of the Legal Protection of Traditional Cultural Expressions/Expressions of Folklore* (2003), argues that patents of invention may be relevant to the protection of traditional cultural expressions, relating to the traditional methods of producing them,⁶⁸⁰ but it is evident that their eventual application to traditional cultural expressions has several disadvantages: limited term of protection, expensive applications requiring legal assistance and advice, difficult to defend, and more important, protect the knowledge of individual inventors, not collective knowledge of communities.

For completeness of this study instead, it is necessary to clarify four more instruments applicable to Fiji's intangible cultural properties, differing from other classical categories of intellectual property: design regimes, performers'

⁶⁷⁹ According to Art. 27 of the TRIPS Agreement:

"...patents shall be available for any inventions, whether products or processes, in all fields of technology, provided that they are new, involve an inventive step and are capable of industrial application."

⁶⁸⁰ One example is a patent obtained in respect of a process for the formation of the Caribbean steelpan musical instrument, which has raised objections from some people in the Caribbean (WIPO Background Paper No.1, 2003: 54).

neighboring rights, unfair competition, and lastly the passing off.

Design regimes usually protect commercial interests in the aesthetic qualities of two-or-three-dimensional objects with artistic qualities intended for industrial purposes. Palethorpe & Verhulst (2003) observe that the design regime is not harmonized on an international level to the same degree as other intellectual property instruments like copyright and trade marks are. However, they argue that nothing excludes traditional cultural expressions from such protection *a priori*, but it clearly does not cover all of them. Only “the tangible, graphic or figurative manifestations of the cultural tradition of a people” (Gautier 1997: 117 quoted in Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 305) are capable of this kind of protection.

Two criteria must be satisfied before design protection is possible: the design must be ‘novel’, i.e., not known nor previously used, or in the public domain. Meaning that no identical or very similar design has been made available to the public before. Secondly, it must be ‘original’, requiring the personal creative effort of the designer, like for the originality requirement for the copyright protection. Thus, for similar reasons, indigenous designs may not meet these criteria because of the cultural and artistic incremental development in a communal setting. In addition to the inconveniences already referred to on the topic of copyright which apply to the field of designs, unlike copyright, the protection is not automatic and requires that they be deposited with a public body and typically last 10-25 years.

Performers’ neighboring rights, as recognized in the World Intellectual Property Organization Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT), protects

performances and performers, defined: “actors, singers, musicians, dancers, and other persons who act, sing, deliver, declaim, play in, interpret, or otherwise perform literary or artistic works or expressions of folklore”.⁶⁸¹ Therefore, in principal at least, these performances are protected by international law.

Unfortunately, less than fifty states have so far ratified the Treaty, and Fiji is not on the list. The point however, is that the protection of performances of expressions of folklore would not automatically protect the expressions of folklore themselves.

According to a WIPO commentary, “it is a fair expectation, provided the performer is from the same cultural community, that is the ‘holder’ of the expressions of folklore”.⁶⁸² Another less advantageous aspect of the WPPT is that it does not extend to the visual part of performances. Only the ‘aural’ part is protected, which would limit the usefulness of the WPPT in so far as traditional cultural expressions are concerned. Furthermore, the ‘folkloric’ variables involved in the area of neighboring rights are identical to those in the area of authors’ rights (Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000: 32), thus similar issues relating to authors’ rights, such as originality, fixation and duration would become an obstacle for certain indigenous performers. The Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Agreement (TRIPS) also provides for the enhanced protection of performers. According to Article 14.1, performers shall have the possibility of preventing the unauthorized fixation of their performance on a phonogram (e.g. the recording of a live musical performance). Unfortunately, the fixation right covers only aural,

⁶⁸¹ WPPT 1996, Art. 2.

⁶⁸² Background Paper No.1, 2003: 45

not audiovisual fixations.

Unfair competition, Lucas-Shloetter (2004) observes, in a way or another, is penalized by all national legislations. Article 10*bis* of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property provides that any act of competition contrary to honest practices in industrial or commercial matters constitutes an act of unfair competition.⁶⁸³ Although Fiji is not among the contracting parties, Article 10*bis* has been incorporated in the TRIPS Agreement.⁶⁸⁴ The use of unfair competition to protect traditional cultural expressions has the inconvenient feature that it is in principle limited to commercial transactions, which is not always the case with folklore, “some aspects of folklore, such as ritual or dance [...] do not generally qualify as commercial activities” (Berryman 1994: 316).

In addition, it presupposes a competitive relationship between the indigenous community and the third party who is to be prevented from marketing elements from the community’s cultural heritage. In other words, Guest notes that “the tribes would have to demonstrate for the court their viability as a commercial competitor in the marketplace injured by the use of their Native national names” (Guest 1996: 267). Among the activities by exploiters of traditional cultural expressions that can be contested on the basis of unfair or parasitic competition, a distinction should be made between the disclosure of confidential information and the unlawful exploitation of another’s reputation.

While unlawful exploitation of another’s reputation in practice covers

⁶⁸³ Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (March 20, 1883, as revised at Brussels on December 14, 1900, at Washington on June 2, 1911, at The Hague on November 6, 1925, at London on June 2, 1934, at Lisbon on October 31, 1958, and at Stockholm on July 14, 1967, and as amended on September 28, 1979).

⁶⁸⁴ Article 2.1

mainly tangible expressions of folklore, the disclosure of confidential information can play a role in the field of intangible cultural heritage. According to Lucas-Schloetter (2004), the disclosure of confidential information should certainly serve as a basis for an action by indigenous communities contesting an unauthorized disclosure of certain expressions of their culture, more precisely those of a secret or sacred character. Palethorpe & Verhulst point out that this area of law has been used to protect indigenous sacred knowledge in Australia. In the case *Foster vs. Mountford*⁶⁸⁵ the book *Nomads of the Australian Desert*, published by an anthropologist contained particular information regarding sacred sites, objects, paintings and rock engravings of the Pitjantjara people, was withheld from further publication by interlocutory injunction, because it disclosed information communicated in confidence, “a confidence, he himself, as an anthropologist, accepted, and is reminded of by these people.”⁶⁸⁶ (Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000; Janke 1997; Lucas-Schloetter 2004).

Unfortunately, the detriment suffered by indigenous communities resulting from the disclosure of confidential sacred knowledge is not adequately recompensed by compensatory damages, which can never make the information sacred again. However, Janke observes that “this area of law has proved effective in protecting sacred and secret material that is previously unpublished.” (Janke 1997: 20). Any action to protect confidential information presupposes three conditions: that the information is of confidential nature, which Gray explains it retains its quality of confidentiality as long as its secrets are known only to those

⁶⁸⁵ (1977), 14 ALR 71.

⁶⁸⁶ 14 ALR 71 at 72 (Supreme Court of the Northern Territory).

authorized by indigenous customary to know them (Gray 1991: 18). Second, that the recipient is subject to an obligation of confidentiality, and that the information has been used without authorization (Gray *ibid.*).

An incident which occurred in Beqa around June 2005 may propose a sub-scenario: what happens when to disclose confidential information is a member of the indigenous community concerned? A couple of men from Rukua village were advertising their small ‘village-stay’ ecotourism operation on the Internet. Mika, my field consultant from Rukua, had noticed that the part of the upriver path heading to the Namoliwai pond we had been mapping months before, had been cleared presumably for facilitating the hike for the guests of the ecotourism.⁶⁸⁷

This immediately concerned the Tui Sawau, whose message for the Rukua’s people in charge of the ecotourism was that the Namoliwai is *tabu*, it is a sacred site belonging to the Sawau heritage and it should remain banned to outsiders. The incident could in fact meet the rationale of the confidential information provision, but unfortunately the field is restricted to expressions that have not yet been disclosed, whereas in the case of the Namoliwai locale, there are several variants of the legend available on the Internet or travel guides and articles.

The passing off doctrine, lastly, is also relevant to the protection of Beqa’s cultural heritage and in particular to the appropriation and misrepresentation of the *vilavilairovo*. This doctrine is well known in the Australian Trade Practices Act. Similarly to trade practices law of misleading and deceptive conduct, passing

⁶⁸⁷ Namoliwai is the place where in the legend the ‘gift’ of *vilavilairovo* was exchanged between Tui Qalita and the Tui Namoliwai.

off is designed to protect the reputation of a business from misrepresentation and other deceptive confusing practices.

The classic passing off situation is where a company represents to the public that its goods or services are that of another, including misrepresentation as to the source of goods; misrepresentation that there is some sort of connection or association with another person's business, whether by way of partnership, sponsorship or licensing; misrepresentation that there is a connection or association with another person's images, characters, and personalities; deceptive or confusing use of names, descriptive terms and other indications to persuade the public to believe that goods and services have an association, quality or endorsement that belongs or is associated to the goods and services of another (Janke 2003: 38). The main obstacle for an indigenous community may be to demonstrate the commercial damage or likely damage to their reputation caused by the third party's offending conduct, as often this will require detailed and costly survey evidence.

The discussion above has shown at the present stage of development in Fiji and in the Pacific region the real need of protection in the area of TKEC and intangible cultural heritage. The introduction of a community-based rights scheme into the current western framework will be challenging, given that the existing legal structure focuses on the individual. The individual-based system is foreign to indigenous peoples in Fiji and elsewhere. They understand their place in the world as that of a people born into a network of group relations, and whose rights and duties in the community arise from, and exist entirely within, the context of

the group. For these groups, one's clan, kinship, and family identities make up personal identity. The individual sees his/her rights and responsibilities as arising exclusively within the framework of such familial, social, and tribal networks. Rights are part of group membership, and individual rights exist in contemplation of how they may be suited to the larger political group (see Riley, 2000, Clinton, 1990).

Intellectual Property Rights: The International Dimension

Before moving to an analysis of *sui generis* rights, some of them generated from the momentum UNESCO and WIPO stirred at international level in the last couple of decades, it is interesting to see how some international efforts addressing the inadequacies of intellectual property in the protection of traditional cultural expressions have or have not affected the status quo, how they intersect in the global treatise panorama, and if they potentially create a 'disproportionate' protection.

The *Rome Convention*,⁶⁸⁸ concluded in 1961, arose out of the joint efforts of the International Labour Organization, UNESCO and WIPO, setting the tone for further implementations. The Convention sets out minimum standards for the protection of performers. These standards provide a reasonably useful means of protecting a limited range of traditional cultural expressions through the 'performers' neighboring rights' discussed above. The performers to which the Convention applies are defined as those who perform literary or artistic works and so it does not clearly relate to intangible cultural heritage. However, since the Convention sets out minimum standards, it is open

⁶⁸⁸ International Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations, Rome 26 Oct. 1961. Fiji is a member since April 1972.

for States to include the performers of traditional culture in the definition ‘performers’.

Blake observes that in this way, where traditional tales, stories, dances, instrumental music, songs, ritualized performances are performed live and the protection of performers is extended to the expressions themselves, then the performances of such expressions would also be protected (Blake 2002: 24). Such protection shall not prejudice any protection otherwise provided to the performers, allowing for additional and specific protection to the performers. Janke observes that under the *Rome Convention*, a ‘performance’ can only be a performance of a ‘work’ and in many cases, as a traditional dance or a ritualized performance like in the case of the *vilavilairevo*, is *not* considered to be ‘original’, thus it does not constitute a ‘work’ (Janke 2003: 90). In addition, the eventual protection does not provide any protection against unauthorized performance or fixation, reproduction, broadcasting and other communication to the public of such traditional cultural forms (Blake *ibid.*).

Another landmark attempt is the 1967 Diplomatic Conference of Stockholm, convened for the purpose of revising the *Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works*’ aspects responsible to the late 1800s romantic view of literary and artistic creation. At the Conference the Indian delegation proposed the incorporation of “works of folklore” into the inclusive definition of literary and artistic works, which resulted in the insertion of Article 15(4). This article offers the possibility of international protection of traditional expressions of culture and applies to “unpublished works of an unknown author” who is a national of a country member of the Convention.⁶⁸⁹

In such situations, the presumed country of citizenship may by legislation

⁶⁸⁹ Fiji is a member of the *Berne Convention* since December 1971.

designate a competent authority to represent the author and protect his or her rights. The designation is then to be communicated to the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization. Palethorpe & Verhulst comment on the inadequacy of such provision due to practical application reasons: ‘folklore’ is not expressly mentioned in Article 15(4), and it is not clear the amendment applies to it; the provision leaves the possibility of copyright protection of folkloric works to the discretion of national legislatures; the provision contains no information as to what functions and responsibilities a ‘competent authority’ should administer; the provision ceases to apply in the event that a work is published, thus the designated authority no longer retains jurisdiction for the purpose of the Convention (Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000: 38). The simple fact that only India, the original proponent, has implemented the provisions, show the inadequacy of the Stockholm solution. However, with the incorporation of Article 15 into the TRIPS Agreement (Article 9.1), it remains a question for national legislatures whether to implement this provision.

Based on the substantive obligations contained in the *Berne Convention* and the *Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property*, adding higher standards in certain areas, TRIPS was designed to ‘harmonize’ intellectual property rights standards as they apply to trade in order to encourage international trade and provide it with a more secure basis. Judging the impact of TRIPS Agreement on traditional cultural expressions, Blake observes that the level of protection through copyright and neighboring rights offered under TRIPS is thus reduced and determined essentially by reference to the economic rights afforded by the *Berne Convention* and, by implication, the *Rome Convention*. Moreover, the economic rights are granted only in the context of achieving

the objectives of TRIPS and not for the sake of the protection *per se* (Blake 2002: 26).

As previously discussed, the TRIPS Agreement, amending the *Rome Convention*—not mentioned at all—provides for the increased protection of the performers,⁶⁹⁰ for certain performers' neighboring rights are protected in TRIPS, allowing traditional performers to prevent the fixation and subsequent reproduction of their unfixed performance, the broadcasting and communication to the public of their live performances, for a period of fifty years from the time of the performance of its fixation. One of the (few) main benefits of TRIPS is that it places an obligation on the Member States⁶⁹¹ to provide the holders of the economic rights related to copyright, neighboring rights and industrial property rights with the various legal means set out to ensure their enforcement.⁶⁹² On the other hand, TRIPS fails to protect the moral rights of the authors. This is quite significant as far as the intangible cultural heritage is concerned, since it is this aspect of copyright law that is of most relevance to the needs of the creators of that unique heritage (Blake 2002: 26).

This deficiency will re-emerge in the next section and in the discussions concerning the framing of *sui generis* protection. However, it is a significant point that *sui generis* laws designed to the protection of traditional expressions of folklore, do not violate TRIPS since it simply stimulates 'minimum obligations',⁶⁹³ leaving open the possibility for Member States to establish protection that grants a broader set of rights.⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹⁰ Article 14.1.

⁶⁹¹ Fiji is a member of TRIPS Agreement since January 1996.

⁶⁹² TRIPS Agreement Part III.

⁶⁹³ TRIPS Agreement Article 1.1.

⁶⁹⁴ Third World Network (Penang), an independent non-profit international network of organizations and individuals involved in issues relating to development, has proposed the development of a Model Law dealing with community intellectual property rights as response to the World Trade Organizations-TRIPS Agreement call for new forms of *sui generis* protection

A call for *sui generis* protection came, more recently, from Nuno Pires de Carvalho, WIPO's Acting Director-Advisor Industrial Property Legislation for Development. Dutfield reports Carvalho's suggestion that traditional knowledge databases should be protected under special database right. The concern is that despite the tremendous interest in documenting it and placing it in databases, indigenous communities are rarely the ones responsible for compiling or holding the databases. Copyright law does not provide an adequate solution. Carvalho then suggests establishing a mechanism of protection that ensures the exclusivity as to the use of the databases' contents (Pires de Carvalho 1999, quoted in Dutfield, 2004: 120-1).

Dutfield observes that the basis for Carvalho's proposal may be found in Article 39.3 of TRIPS which deals with test or other data that must be submitted to government authorities as a condition of approving the marketing of agrochemical products. The Article requires governments to protect such data against disclosure and unfair commercial use. according to Dutfield and Carvalho, such protection should be extended to traditional knowledge in the form of a legal framework for a traditional knowledge database system (Dutfield *ibid.*).

Unfortunately, WIPO does not have a dispute settlement mechanism dealing with alleged cases of non-compliance with the intellectual property rights treaties administered by its body.⁶⁹⁵ Nevertheless, WIPO is still the most important international institution

(Posey and Dutfield 1997: 110, quoted in Blake 2002: 55).

⁶⁹⁵ Among others, relevant to this study are: The Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (1883, revised in 1967 at Stockholm); The Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (1886, revised most recently in 1971 at Paris and amended in 1979); The WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (1996) (which is designed to be applied in tandem with the Rome Convention); The Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Trademarks (1891, revised most recently in 1967 at Stockholm and amended in 1979); and The Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellation of Origin and their

educated to the understanding of the global intellectual property rights regime. WIPO is building closer links with other institutions, like the WTO⁶⁹⁶ and the CBD Conference⁶⁹⁷, and in particular helping developing countries to meet the TRIPS obligations, through technical assistance in preparing legislation, institution building and modernizing property systems and enforcement.⁶⁹⁸

After the WIPO-UNESCO World Forum on Folklore in Phuket, discussed in the previous chapter, the majority of participants agreed that copyright law was inadequate to protect traditional cultural expressions and urged WIPO and UNESCO to pursue their efforts to ensure an effective and appropriate international regime for the protection of folklore (Dutfield 2004: 133).⁶⁹⁹ In early 1998, WIPO established a unit called Global Intellectual Property Issues Division (GIPID),⁷⁰⁰ with the purpose of identifying and responding to the new challenges for the intellectual property system of globalization and rapid technological changes.

The previous chapter has discussed already the nine “Fact-finding Missions” in various parts of the world to investigate the needs and expectations of the culture bearers, keeping in mind the possible use of existing IPRs (intellectual property rights) to protect traditional knowledge and study the relationship between customary law and formal

International Registration (1958, revised in 1967 at Stockholm and amended in 1979); Patent Cooperation Treaty (1970, amended in 1979 and modified in 1984).

⁶⁹⁶ World Trade Organization.

⁶⁹⁷ It is beyond the scope of this study the discussion of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), ratified by Fiji on 25 February 1993. The CBD is important because it affirms that States have sovereign rights over their own biological resources. The key provisions on the CBD relating to intellectual property and traditional knowledge are in Article 8, 15 and 16. Article 8(j)-1 places the obligation on Contracting Parties to “respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.”

⁶⁹⁸ Joint WIPO-UNESCO press release, 21 July 1998.

⁶⁹⁹ Phuket Plan of Action, 235, UNESCO and WIPO (8-10 April 1997).

⁷⁰⁰ Renamed in 2001 Traditional Knowledge Division.

intellectual property systems. After evaluating the Missions' results, in the Fall 2000, WIPO's General Assembly, established an "Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore" (ICG),⁷⁰¹ one of the main themes was the protection of expressions of folklore (WIPO 2000, quoted in Dutfield 2004: 135).

Dutfield (2004) doubts that this work is likely to lead to a new treaty. However, there is a great deal of interest and initiatives emerging from these international seminars. Interestingly, in April 2002, on India's Traditional Knowledge Digital Library example, communiqués on national *sui generis* systems were issued. *Sui generis* systems, consisting of inventoring of publications that regularly document traditional knowledge and databases of public domain traditional knowledge, were seen as possible means for protection and growth of traditional knowledge within national jurisdictions. It was becoming evident that it is inappropriate for countries to come up with a one-size-fits-all international *sui generis* system.

Blake asks if it will be aimed at protecting all aspects of intangible heritage including traditional knowledge, or it will be limited to the intellectual expressions of such heritage, akin to the 'expressions of folklore' (Blake 2002: 28). Obviously, the critical area would be to develop criteria for identifying traditional cultural expressions applicable to several different countries. Dutfield argues that "any new international norms will have to be flexible enough to accommodate this jurisprudential diversity. If not, they will fail. Close collaboration with TK-holders [traditional knowledge] and their

⁷⁰¹ See previous chapter.

communities is essential in the design of the *sui generis* system.” (Dutfield 2004: 124).⁷⁰²

From a participatory perspective, on April 27, 2005 I was invited by Mere Ratunabuabua to participate in the “Celebrating World Intellectual Property Day 2005” meeting at the University of the South Pacific, whose theme was: “think, imagine, create”,⁷⁰³ which in the invitation was presented as “an opportunity to create a broader awareness amongst the general public of the value of intellectual property and the role it plays in Fiji”.⁷⁰⁴ Despite the growing awareness and initiatives on the issue of intellectual property I could notice in Suva, the “think, imagine create” message from Kamil Idris, Director General of WIPO directed particularly towards the young people, appears ambivalent, top-down and detached from the social reality I had been observing at rural and urban level. It is not clear how, in a predominantly communal property context, young people in Fiji should be motivated “to recognize the creator, the problem-solver, the artist within themselves” in other words, ‘individual rights’ (Idris 2005: 1).⁷⁰⁵ Contextually, to what extent the message “think, imagine, create” should be re-directed at community level in order “to inspire young people to follow their dreams to the fullest” (Idris *ibid.*).

The dimension and the inevitable contradictions of this one-size-fits-all message emerged indirectly from the participants’ speeches. The Honorable Mr. Justice Devendra Pathik, Chairman of the Copyright Tribunal, after dwelling on the enunciation of the Berne, Rome and Paris Conventions and the formulation of the Fiji Copyright Act,

⁷⁰² On September 2005, WIPO announced that the WIPO Member States have agreed to continue accelerated work in intellectual property and traditional knowledge, genetic resources and folklore or traditional cultural expressions (TCEs), with a focus on the international dimension, including the possible development of an international instrument

⁷⁰³ Office of the Attorney General booklet, April 25, 2005.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁵ Message from Dr. Kamil Idris, WIPO, April 26, 2005.

admitted that “Fiji’s major problem is the enforcement of the copyright law” (Pathik pers. comm.). Pathik’s words were echoed by those of Eremasi Tamanisau, a Fijian artist representing performers’ rights,⁷⁰⁶ who, leaving to one side for a moment the issue of the cultural and economic advancement, denounced the inadequateness of copyright law in Fiji in protecting traditional and contemporary expressions of culture at local and international level.

An explanation could be found in the fact that because the Pacific region is relatively technologically undeveloped, intellectual property disputes of the sorts arising in the west, are unlikely to occur, at least in the immediate future (see Forsyth 2003). Moreover, Forsyth observes that the current regimes of intellectual property protection in the South Pacific are not being utilized to protect intellectual property. Forsyth argues that this is shown by the fact that to date there have only been two reported trademark cases, three copyright cases, and no patent cases in the whole of the region. In addition, many of the enforcement agencies essential to the efficacy of the system are not operational.

For example, in PNG it appears that although the new copyright legislation is in force, there is uncertainty over which body is responsible for its administration. In the Solomon Islands, although the *Copyright Act* was passed in 1987, by late 2001 it was reported that nothing had been registered under the Act and that the Registration Office is not yet ready to register anything under the Act. Similarly, in Fiji there is provision in the Act for a Copyright Tribunal, but as yet there has been no appointment to the Tribunal.”

⁷⁰⁶ Eremasi Tamanisau is the Chairman of the Fiji Performing Right Association (FPRA) a non-profit organization which was established in 1993 to administer the performing rights of its' local composer and songwriter members in compliance with the copyright law.

(Forsyth 2003: 5). The point, Forsyth observes, is that WIPO is persevering in the trend of placing strong pressures on governments in the Pacific region to continue introducing western style intellectual property laws (Forsyth 2003: 10). Similarly, Forsyth concludes her analysis on intellectual property laws in the Pacific assuming that western style intellectual property laws are ill-suited to protecting this area of intellectual property on both a policy and a practical level.

In the course of this chapter we have seen that the application of intellectual property may itself be seen as a colonizing domination in that it forces an assimilation of indigenous culture. Several commentators (*inter alia* Taubman 2005; Mead 2007, 2005, 2004; Peteru 2007, 2005; Strathern 2004; Kalinoe 2004; Twarog 2004; Drahos 2004, 2000; Graeme 2004; Dutfield 2004, 1999; Marahare 2004; Forsyth 2003; Janke 2003; Amegatcher 2002; Daes 2001; Ragavan 2001; Scafidi 2001; Solomon 2001; Puri 2001, 1999; Halewood 1999; Coombe 1998; Farley 1997; Simpson 1997; Dutfield and Posey 1996; Posey 1996) maintain that if the assimilation tendency of western legal regimes is not the answer, a possible answer is the development on a case-by-case basis of a flexible, liberal *sui generis* protection drawing on customary law. Building on this analysis, the next section, shows that there are many possible ways to protect this area as long as they grow from grass-roots support rather than one that is imposed from the top down and are specifically crafted to meet the ideological and practical requirements of each Pacific country.

Beyond Intellectual Property Rights: The *Sui Generis* Dimension

Summarizing several commentators' thought, it seems an implicit understanding

exists that the ‘protection’ that is required is a permanent protection for traditional knowledge and expressions of culture that have been developed and passed down through generations. Often this knowledge is community owned and the result of collaborative efforts. Furthermore, often protection is wanted without public disclosure, as is the case for sacred expressions of knowledge and culture. A protection of this sort generally falls outside the aegis of western-style intellectual property laws. So, if we conclude that western style intellectual property protection cannot satisfactorily meet the needs of indigenous intellectual property, what can? Are the options currently available including unfair competition and adapted, expanded *sui generis* elements of existing intellectual property capable of protecting traditional cultural expressions? What mechanisms exist in other local, national or regional systems, including indigenous and customary systems? What conceptual lesson can be learned from them? There has been a great deal of discussion of this issue at both international and regional level.

One of the responses that has been suggested is *sui generis* protection, as a means of restraining use of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions by third parties who are not bound by any contractual or fiduciary relations to the traditional custodians and who do not infringe intellectual property rights. Taubman⁷⁰⁷ argues that an ideal foundational principle for *sui generis* traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions protection would be to defer to its customary normative context, to apply globally what Daes terms the ‘principle of locality’: “to resolve any disputes over the acquisition and use of indigenous people’s heritage according to the customary laws of the indigenous peoples concerned” (Daes 2000, cited in Taubman 2005: 528), akin to

⁷⁰⁷ Anthony Taubman, Faculty of Law, Australian National University is currently on secondment to WIPO as Head Traditional Knowledge Division (Global IP Issues).

the principle of *lex loci*.

The focus would shift from codifying anew the relevant forms of legal protection towards giving effect more broadly to the rules or norms that already govern traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions in their customary context, giving wider legal expression to traditional conceptions of ownership, custodianship and responsibility over traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. The still exploratory nature on national approaches to *sui generis* protection of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions suggests that the international dimension of their protection may need to take the same trajectory, by initially creating mechanisms to trigger protection in foreign jurisdictions through national treatment of reciprocity, allowing the evolution of national systems in line with diverse domestic needs, and for possible future convergence in the light of practical experience allowing the functional vectors of customary law to pass from the original jurisdiction to foreign jurisdictions. A too strong and pre-emptive international *sui generis* model for IP protection risks homogenizing the subject matter of protection. Instead, a *suorum genorum* framework – an heterogeneous network of mutual recognition that does not confine traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions to one distinct genus, but recognizes that divergent knowledge traditions integrated with customary law, warrants recognition as a distinctive genera, under the aegis of a general set of core principles (Taubman *ibid.*).

It is clear that at local level, national governments should consult with indigenous communities regarding their own customary systems of knowledge sharing and control (Halewood 1999: 995). Some of the interrogations at this point are: what policy framework and which policy options are relevant in elaborating systems for the specific

sui generis protection of traditional cultural expressions? How such *sui generis* systems relate to conventional intellectual property systems particularly in respect of overlapping subject matter? How national systems interact through bilateral, regional or interregional legal frameworks? How is Fiji responding to this fundamental policy issues? I believe that it is fundamental to scrutinize the *sui generis* dimension at both international and regional level, its progressions and its slow and certainly difficult adaptation, in order to understand the recent normative developments in Fiji I was a participant observer of during the second part of my fieldwork.

The Model Law on Copyright for the use of developing countries, known as the *Tunis Model Law*,⁷⁰⁸ was the first text drawn up at supranational level containing specific provisions on the subject. The text is intended to serve as inspiration for the developing countries desiring to adopt or amend their national legislation on copyright and is designed to incorporate the protection of traditional expressions of culture into national copyright legislation of participating states. Recently commentators (Lucas-Schloetter 2004; Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000) have observed that the *Tunis Model Law* allows the protection for “works inspired by national folklore”,⁷⁰⁹ accounting for orally transmitted transgenerational expressions of culture, by inclusion of both economic and moral rights.

It also respects two critically important issues for the protection of traditional cultural expressions: the absence of a fixation requirement and an indefinite term of protection.⁷¹⁰ However, this protection is by means of classical copyright law and not *sui generis* protection. More problematic is the fact that the *Tunis Model Law* offers two

⁷⁰⁸ The Tunis Model Law was adopted by a committee of governmental experts that met in Tunis from 23 February to 2 March 1976 with the participation of the WIPO and UNESCO. Its provisions were adopted into national legislation of around 30 countries (Nordmann 2001: 28).

⁷⁰⁹ Article 2 para.1(iii).

⁷¹⁰ Article 6 para. 2.

alternatives: either the protection of ‘folklore’ is established on the basis of classical copyright, i.e., an exclusive right, which presupposes that any use of a manifestation of folklore is subject to an authorization by the competent authority, or the folklore is considered as being part of the public domain, in which case it can be used ‘freely’, the establishment of the system of a paying public domain simply having the effect of subjecting such use to the payment of a fee.⁷¹¹ Lucas-Schloetter does not see any overlapping or opposition between the concept of paying public domain and copyright.

However, the system of paying public domain is intended to take over the exclusive right upon expiry of the protected period, but in the field of ‘folklore’, she notices, the protection on the basis of copyright established by the *Tunis Model Law* is unlimited in time, and it is consequently difficult to identify the time at which the paying public domain replaces the principle of the exclusive right. Another contradiction is that although the copyright in works of national ‘folklore’ “is exercised by the competent authority”,⁷¹² it is not stated, on the other hand, to whom they belong originally.

Alternative models for an ‘international’ protection of traditional cultural expressions were explored by the WIPO and UNESCO following the unsuccessful attempts under Article 15(4) of the *Berne Convention*. By 1982, this effort resulted in the *Model Provisions for National Laws for the Protection of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and Other Prejudicial Actions*, adopted by a Committee of Government Experts. The *Model Provisions* were designed to provide for intellectual-property-type protection of traditional cultural expressions against certain unauthorized uses and against

⁷¹¹ The French concept of *domaine public payant* requires payment of royalties for the use of literary and musical works in the public domain (K. Puri, 2000).

⁷¹² Article 6 para. 1.

distortion. They were intended to serve as a framework for national legislative action in the area of traditional cultural expressions. The *Model Provisions* were welcomed by the 1983 joint meeting of the Executive Committee of the *Berne Convention* and at the Intergovernmental Copyright Committee of the *Universal Copyright Convention* as a first step in establishing a *sui generis* system of protection for traditional expressions of folklore. Its adoption was intended to provide a basis for regional and international system of protection through a system of reciprocity.

It must be noted that *Model Provisions* it is not a legal instrument with binding force, but merely, as its name implies, provisions having the force of a model. Thus, in 1984 the Group of Experts on the International Protection of Expressions of Folklore by Intellectual Property considered a draft treaty that provided for specific protection at the international level of traditional expressions of folklore, based on the *Model Provisions*: the “Draft Treaty for the Protection of Expressions of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and Other Prejudicial Actions”⁷¹³ (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 345; Carneiro da Cunha 2001: 2; Kuruk 1999: 813).

The Draft Treaty very broadly takes up the contents of the *Model Provisions*. The originality of the Draft Treaty as compared to the *Model Provisions* lies in the obligation imposed on the Contracting States on the one hand to designate “one or more competent authorities which shall administer the protection, under this Treaty, of the expressions of folklore”⁷¹⁴, and on the other hand to grant “the same protection to expressions of folklore originating in other Contracting States as it accords to expressions of folklore

⁷¹³ WIPO/UNESCO, 1984.

⁷¹⁴ Section 3.

originating in its own territory”.⁷¹⁵ Thus, Lucas-Schloetter, observes that the Draft Treaty expressly regulates the problem of the protection of foreign folklore by establishing the principle of national treatment, while the *Model Provisions* were less explicit on this topic⁷¹⁶ (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 346).

While the need for a system of international protection was widely recognized, however, a majority of the participants considered it premature and expressed some diverging opinions as to the suitability of a multilateral treaty on the basis of a *sui generis* system. Firstly, there was insufficient experience on the question of protection of traditional cultural expressions and a lack of appropriate sources for identification of traditional cultural expressions to be protected at national level, and secondly, there was an absence of workable mechanisms for settling the questions of traditional cultural expressions that can be found not only in one country, but in several countries of a region (Dehenz 1997: 198, quoted in Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000: 48). Such difficulties pointed out the problem of knowing the expressions that should be really protected, and to the establishment of inventories or appropriate sources for the identification of national ‘folklore’.

Like the *Model Provisions* the “Draft Treaty” fell into oblivion (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 346). Although it was nowhere adopted in full (Blake 2001: 28), the *Model Provisions* has inspired a number of African legislatures⁷¹⁷ and has gained support as a foundation upon which an international agreement for the protection of traditional cultural expressions could be based. The Draft Treaty, on the other hand, recently

⁷¹⁵ Section 2.

⁷¹⁶ Section 14: “Expressions of folklore developed and maintained in a foreign country are protected under this [law], (i) subject to reciprocity, or (ii) on the basis of international treaties or other agreements.”

⁷¹⁷ In particular Nigeria.

acquired momentum again, for one provision obliging every country desiring to ratify it to first set up legislation in harmony with its provisions.⁷¹⁸ That is, pushing for the “need of a minimum of national and regional provisions as a condition for the viability of a treaty on the protection of folklore” (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 347).

Year 1993, The United Nations’ “Year of the World’s Indigenous Peoples”,⁷¹⁹ represents a yardstick in the field of protection of intellectual property of indigenous peoples. One of the results was the next year, the promulgation of a “Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, formulated by the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), but yet not adopted.⁷²⁰ Helewood argues that “if the draft were to come into force into its present form it would be the strongest statement to date regarding the obligation to provide legal protection for indigenous knowledge and innovations” (Halewood 1999: 987). Indigenous peoples are “entitled to the full recognition of the ownership, control, and protection for their cultural and intellectual property.”⁷²¹

The Draft Declaration seems to support “communal ownership, extending it to the

⁷¹⁸ Section 13 para. 4.

⁷¹⁹ The theme of the International Year was: “Indigenous People: A New Partnership”, aimed at encouraging new relationships and reconciliation between indigenous people and states. The second aim of the International Year was to enhance the resources available to indigenous peoples through providing support for projects in the areas of health, education, culture (Daes 1993: 2-3).

⁷²⁰ The United Nations Economic and Social Council authorized the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to establish the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) in 1982. Since then, the WGIP has worked with UNESCO on a program setting standards in regards to indigenous peoples and their rights. In 1984 Erica-Irene Daes was elected Chairperson Rapporteur of the Working Group. In 1985 the WGIP began drafting a declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. The draft was completed in 1993, and reviewed by the Commission on Human Rights in 1995. The declaration is still under discussion, and does not have an official name yet. When adopted, it will likely be the most comprehensive statement of the rights of indigenous peoples ever developed: the declaration establishes collective rights to a degree unprecedented in international human rights law (Leaflet No.5, *United Nations Guide* series, published by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Office, Geneva, 2001).

⁷²¹ Article 29.

ownership of cultural and spiritual expressions and their underlying intellectual property rights, by the tribal community as a whole” (Jordan 2000: 110). Hertz concludes that “The Draft’s emphatic recognition of the fact that the cultural survival of indigenous peoples requires a collective as well as an individual rights approach may improve demonstrably the status of indigenous peoples under international law” (Herz 1993: 712). Some other commentators note instead, that if adopted this Declaration would only have the status and the effect of a statement of principles which is not binding or justiciable (Chapman 1994: 219-20).

In the same year, Erica-Irene Daes and the Working Group on Indigenous Populations developed *The Study on the Protection of the Cultural and Intellectual Property of Indigenous Peoples* which in Strathern and Hirsch’s (2004) words was a turning point,⁷²² for it gave a voice and a face to the indigenous peoples and their concerns. More recently, Daes elaborated the *Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples*.⁷²³ Lucas-Schloetter (2004) notes that

⁷²² In 1992, the Economic and Social Council endorsed the appointment of Erica-Irene Daes, Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, as Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to prepare a study on measures which should be taken by the international community to strengthen respect for the cultural and intellectual property of indigenous peoples. The completed study was submitted to the Sub-Commission in August 1993. She completed the elaboration of these principles and guidelines and submitted her relevant preliminary report on *Protection of Indigenous People* (Doc. E/CN.4/Sub 2/1994/31 of July 8, 1994) to the 46th Session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

The study was followed up with a request to the Special Rapporteur to draft basic principles and guidelines for protecting the heritage of indigenous peoples and for promoting a wider dialogue between indigenous peoples and the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), international financial institutions, and scientific and professional associations in this field. The draft principles and guidelines were submitted to the Sub-Commission in 1994 and 1995 and a supplementary report in 1996.

⁷²³ Discussed during a seminar held at the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 52nd Session, Report of the Seminar on the Draft Principles and Guidelines for the

mention should be made of a couple of principles contained in the Draft, according to which, “To be effective, the protection of indigenous peoples’ heritage should be based broadly on the principle of self-determination, which includes the right of indigenous peoples to maintain and develop their own cultures and knowledge systems, and forms of social organization”.⁷²⁴ “Indigenous peoples should be the source, the guardians and interpreters of their heritage, whether created in the past, or developed by them in the future”,⁷²⁵ and that “Indigenous peoples’ ownership and custody of their heritage should be collective, permanent and inalienable, or as prescribed by the customs, rules and practices of each people.”⁷²⁶

More importantly, the Draft contains a specific recommendation: “The prior, free and informed consent of the owners should be an essential precondition of any agreements which may be made for the recording, study, display, access, and use, in any form whatsoever, of indigenous peoples’ heritage.”⁷²⁷ Its last recommendation is for the United Nations “To Consider as a matter of urgent priority the drafting of a convention for the protection of the heritage of indigenous peoples.”⁷²⁸

Within the ‘magic’ momentum of 1993, nine tribes of Mataatua, in the Bay of Plenty Region of New Zealand, convened the First International Conference on the Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples held in Whakatane.⁷²⁹

Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples, Geneva, 28 February, 1 March 2000 (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/26, Annex I).

⁷²⁴ No. 2.

⁷²⁵ No. 3.

⁷²⁶ No. 5.

⁷²⁷ No. 9.

⁷²⁸ No. 55.

⁷²⁹ The Conference met over six days (12-18 June 1993) to consider a range of significant issues, including: the value of indigenous knowledge, biodiversity and biotechnology, customary environmental management, arts, music, language and other physical and spiritual cultural forms.

Over 150 delegates from fourteen countries attended, including indigenous representatives from Ainu (Japan), Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, India, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Surinam, USA, and Aotearoa. On June 18th, the *Mataatua Declaration* was passed by the Plenary.

The Declaration declares that “Indigenous Peoples have the right to self-determination and in exercising that right must be recognized as the exclusive owners of their cultural and intellectual property”.⁷³⁰ The Declaration denounces that “existing protection mechanisms are insufficient for the protection of Indigenous Peoples Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights”⁷³¹ and that indigenous peoples should “define for themselves their own intellectual and cultural property”.⁷³² An interesting recommendation to the Indigenous Peoples is that contained at point 1.8:

- Establish an appropriate body with appropriate mechanisms to:
- a) preserve and monitor the commercialism or otherwise of indigenous cultural properties in the public domain;
 - b) generally advise and encourage indigenous peoples to take steps to protect their cultural heritage;
 - c) allow a mandatory consultative process with respect to any new legislation affecting indigenous peoples cultural and intellectual property rights.

In sum, the Declaration calls for the development of a new legal regime, specifying that the new regime should incorporate: collective ownership, retroactive coverage, protection against “debasement of culturally significant items”,⁷³³ cooperative frameworks and multi-generational coverage. The Declaration becomes relevant for the protection of indigenous cultural expressions only upon “the willingness of national

⁷³⁰ Preamble.

⁷³¹ No. 1.2, and 2.3.

⁷³² No. 1.1.

⁷³³ No. 2.5.

governments to acknowledge its objectives” (Broeke 1997: 47, quoted in Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 355). So far, no action has yet been taken in response to the Declaration. Although without any binding force, the *Mataatua Declaration* is important for the awareness it has raised with indigenous groups, relevant organizations, industry and governments, as I will discuss further in relation to Fiji.⁷³⁴

It is certainly beyond the scope of this study to proceed in the review of each statement and declaration that flourished after the mid 1990s. However, there are a few more ‘declarations’ that deserve to be mentioned in the self-determination process of cultural and intellectual property, which will return in the discussions about Fiji’s own normative process. One, held in Jingarra, Australia, few months after the *Mataatua Declaration*, lead to the publication of the *Julayinbul Statement on Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights*,⁷³⁵ whose peculiar importance is found in the confirmation of the unique spiritual and cultural relationship of indigenous peoples with the earth that determines their perception of intellectual property.⁷³⁶

Moreover, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia the year after, the *COICA Statement*,⁷³⁷ re-confirms that all aspects of the issue of intellectual property are aspects

⁷³⁴ The *Mataatua Declaration* endorses also the recommendations on culture and science from the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territory, Environment and Development, Kari-Oca, Brazil, 25-30 May 1992 (the *Kari-Oca Declaration*).

⁷³⁵ Adopted by the Conference on Cultural and Intellectual Property held in Jingarra 25-27 November 1993.

⁷³⁶ The *Julayinbul Statement* declares that “Aboriginal intellectual property, within Aboriginal Common Law, is an inherent inalienable right which cannot be terminated, extinguished, or taken”. It follows that “any use of the intellectual property of Aboriginal Nations and Peoples may only be done in accordance with Aboriginal Common Law, and any unauthorized use is strictly prohibited.” (Lucas-Shloetter 2004: 355). The Julayinbul Conference also issued a *Declaration Reaffirming the Self Determination and Intellectual Property Rights of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Wet Tropics Rainforest Area* (27 November 1993) primary concerned with bioprospecting.

⁷³⁷ Issued by the International Consultation on Intellectual Property Rights and Biodiversity,

of self-determination (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 356; Blakeney 1999: 84, 93). In 1999, the *Taipei Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*,⁷³⁸ whose final statement emphasizes the indigenous peoples' right to control the development of their cultural heritage, in the pursuit of their self-determination and their economic, social and cultural development (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 356-7). More recently, in 2003, the *Paoakalani Declaration*, which I will briefly comment on in the next section, as part of my circumstantial 'consultational' activity during Fiji's review process of the Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill.

In April 1995, the South Pacific Regional Consultation on Indigenous Peoples, Knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights, was held in Suva, Fiji ("Suva Declaration"). The *Suva Declaration* declared "the right of indigenous peoples of the Pacific to self governance and independence of our lands, territories and resources as the basis for the preservation of indigenous peoples' knowledge."⁷³⁹ In addition to the classical, at this point, criticism of the current intellectual property protection system, it also contains a plan which although essentially concerned with the protection of local biological resources, calling for a moratorium on bioprospecting in the Pacific, is designed to "encourage chiefs, elders and community leaders to play a leadership role in the protection of indigenous peoples' knowledge and resources",⁷⁴⁰ and "strengthen the capacities of indigenous peoples to maintain their oral traditions, and encourage initiatives by indigenous peoples to record their knowledge in a permanent form

organized by the Coordinating Body of the Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon Basin (COICA) (September 1994).

⁷³⁸ Issued in June 1999 by the International Conference on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Taipei, Taiwan.

⁷³⁹ Preamble.

⁷⁴⁰ No. 3.1.

according to their customary access procedures”,⁷⁴¹ asserting also the “in situ conservation by indigenous peoples is the best method to conserve and protect biological diversity and indigenous knowledge, and encourage its implementation by indigenous communities and all relevant bodies.”⁷⁴²

Four years later, in February 1999, as anticipated in the previous chapter, the UNESCO and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community convened a “Symposium on the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Traditional and Popular Indigenous Cultures in the Pacific Islands” in Noumea. The Symposium brought together the representatives of 21 States and territories of the South Pacific region. It took stock of the different aspects of the protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of popular indigenous cultures in the Pacific Islands, and adopted a Final Declaration. The status of legal protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions in the Pacific Islands, which was the first theme, was reviewed in 20 national reports by representatives of Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Marshall Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Norfolk, New Zealand, Aotearoa, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna. “Emphasis was also placed on the need to organize follow-up of public exploitation of expressions of traditional and popular culture, and collective management was mentioned as one of the means that could help indigenous peoples to exercise their rights and to secure an economic return on the commercial exploitation of their traditional cultural heritage.”⁷⁴³

⁷⁴¹ No. 8.

⁷⁴² No. 2.2.

⁷⁴³ <http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php->

In that context, Aroha Mead⁷⁴⁴ and Kamal Puri⁷⁴⁵ re-emphasized the need to provide a specific regional framework for cooperation in the South Pacific Islands, quite different from the traditional approach to intellectual property, designed to encompass all aspects of the protection, conservation and promotion of traditional knowledge and culture by incorporating therein the rules of ancestral custom. In conclusion, the participants asserted the need for the countries of the region to enjoy far more extensive *sui generis* protection than that afforded by the 1982 *Model Provisions*, a form of protection that would cover both traditional and popular culture and traditional knowledge.

Following the Symposium, the next year the Pacific Island Economic Ministers, supported the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) in its work with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in developing an integrated regional policy framework and model legislation for the protection of traditional knowledge in its relation to biodiversity, agriculture, ecological, medicinal and traditional expressions of culture, encouraging guidelines from the regional members. At this point the PIFS' work took two directions: one side working with SPC on issues relating to traditional knowledge in its associations with traditional expressions of culture, and on the other side, working

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⁷⁴⁴ Aroha Te Pareake Mead is a founding member and Co-Chair of the Call of the Earth Steering Committee. She has been involved in indigenous cultural and intellectual property and environmental issues for over thirty years at tribal, national, Pacific regional and international levels. She is currently a Senior Lecturer in Maori Business, Treaty of Waitangi and Maori Resource Management at Victoria University of Wellington's School of Management.

⁷⁴⁵ Kamal Puri has established a significant international reputation in the area of protection of cultural rights of the Asia Pacific peoples, as exemplified by his deep involvement in developing a *sui generis* Model Law for the Pacific region, discussed in the next chapter, a significant initiative of UNESCO in collaboration with PIFS (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat) and SPC (Secretariat of the Pacific Community). The Pacific Model Law drafted for the 27 Pacific Island countries and territories was endorsed by the Pacific Ministers for Culture on 17 September 2002 at a meeting in Noumea, New Caledonia.

with SPREP on traditional knowledge associated to biological knowledge, innovations and practices.

While the work on biological diversity is still ongoing (Peteru 2005 pers. comm.), the *Regional Framework for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture* was presented to cultural policy officers and legal experts from Pacific nations at a workshop, which was attended by a representative of WIPO (Gosselin 2004: 2). Having seen the draft framework and acknowledged the progress, the PIFS Trade Ministers encouraged PIFS in cooperation with SPC, UNESCO and WIPO to proceed with drafting and calling for an adoption of national legislations of the Pacific Model Law.

In June 2002, SPC and PIFS organized the Working Group for Legal Experts on the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture, which reviewed the Pacific Model Law and all the *sui generis* elements in order to effectively provide protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture. The revised model was presented and endorsed by the First Conference of Ministers of Culture of the Pacific Region at their meeting at SPC the following September. Gosselin reports that towards the end of 2003, legal experts from throughout the Pacific met for a second time to review once more the draft Pacific Model Law maintaining it adaptable, with a view of implementation at national level, in each Pacific Island country, and at the time considering means for protecting Pacific Islands' traditional expressions of culture at international level (Gosselin 2004: 3).

The Ethnographer as a Circumstantial Consultant

One of the first meetings I had during my stay in Suva was with the PIFS legal

department. Participating were Mrs. Mere Falemaka, Trade Policy Adviser adjunct to the legal department, who had worked on the Regional Framework, Jim Gosselin, the PIFS multilateral trade policy advisor, who had prepared the report I mentioned above,⁷⁴⁶ and Ms. Gail Olsson, a Research Assistant. I remember arriving at the meeting on February 16, 2005, with lots of question, but I also remember leaving with few answers. Looking back, I think that our meeting was more useful to them, in terms of exploring the possible applications of my own fieldwork in Beqa on intangible cultural heritage on the Pacific Model Law, rather than vice-versa.

However, from the meeting emerged clearly that the Pacific Model Law was, and still is, in the hands of the Fiji Government for amendments, to be more precise in the hands of the First Legal Parliamentary Counsel in the Attorney General's Office. The role of PIFS is actually to look beyond Fiji, to the Regional development and legal processes as a whole. Gosselin told me that both Palau and the Cook Islands⁷⁴⁷ were at an advanced stage in the Pacific Model Law application processes. At the same time, PIFS is working with WIPO, in the effort of setting a tool for international protection, although they agreed that an intellectual property protection at the international level appears very problematic (Gosselin, Falemaka pers. comm.).

The *Regional Framework for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture* comprises a "Background on the Regional Framework for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture", a "Model Law for the

⁷⁴⁶ "UNCTAD-Commonwealth Secretariat Workshop on Elements of National Sui Generis Systems for the Preservation, Protection and Promotion of Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices and Options for an International Framework, Geneva, 4-6 February 2004: Notes by Dr. Jim Gosselin."

⁷⁴⁷ While Fiji appears ahead in the legislative process of enactment into law of the Pacific Model Law, it has not yet been enacted in any country of the region.

Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture” (Pacific Model Law), and an “Explanatory Memorandum for the Model Law for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture”. The Background paper states that “if an individual country wishes to enact the model law, it is free to adopt and/or adapt the provisions as it sees fit in accordance with national needs, the wishes of its traditional communities, legal drafting traditions and so on. Matters of detail or implementation are left to be determined by national laws and systems.”⁷⁴⁸

The Pacific Model Law establishes a new range of statutory rights to protect the traditional owners in their traditional knowledge and expressions of culture (“TKEC”) and to permit tradition-based creativity and innovation.⁷⁴⁹ The definition of TKEC is extensive and is overcoming the limits of western style intellectual property regimes by expressly including works not in material form, including name, stories, chants, oral narratives, ceremonies, ritual performances and cultural practices, works that have been transmitted from generation to generation, and works that are collectively originated and held.⁷⁵⁰ Forsyth (2003) argues that ideologically, the Pacific Model Law seeks to achieve a balance between protecting TKEC and encouraging their commodification (Forsyth 2003: 7). The protection given to TKEC is referred to as Traditional Cultural Rights,

⁷⁴⁸ Background paper (2002), 1.

⁷⁴⁹ Pacific Model Law ‘Definitions’. In Fiji’s 5th Draft revision is regulated at ‘Interpretations’: “traditional owner” of traditional knowledge or expressions of culture –

(a) means –

(i) the *mataqali*; or

(ii) an individual member of a *mataqali* who is recognised by the *mataqali* as the individual ;

in whom the custody or protection of the traditional knowledge or expressions of culture is entrusted in accordance with the customary law and practices of that *mataqali*; (September 2005).

⁷⁵⁰ Pacific Model Law, clauses 4, 8. In Fiji’s 5th Draft revision is regulated at clause 2, 7 (Sep. 2005).

which are in some ways are similar to western style intellectual property rights, but differ in other respects. The right to reproduce, publish, perform, broadcast, fixate (photograph, film, sound recording), transform, modify, make available online, create derivative works, sell, export TKEC, require the prior and informed consent of the traditional owners.⁷⁵¹ These rights are inalienable and in perpetuity.⁷⁵² The rights created by the Pacific Model Law essentially fall into two categories: traditional cultural rights and moral rights. The existence of these rights do not depend upon registration or other formalities,⁷⁵³ and the Pacific Model Law also creates offences and civil actions for contraventions of traditional cultural rights and moral rights.⁷⁵⁴

I would like to underline the importance of the moral rights created for traditional owners, the right of attribution, the right against false attribution, and the right against derogatory treatment in respect of TKEC.⁷⁵⁵ As in European intellectual property regimes,⁷⁵⁶ moral rights basically allow the creator to decide whether his or her work will be made public, ensure that the author is credited with the creation of his or her work, and finally protect the work from distortion, alteration, or misinterpretation. Sundara Ranjian notes for example, that limited moral rights protection set out in *the Berne Convention* (Art. 6bis) are particularly powerful because they continue to be vested in the author even after he has relinquished his rights to economic returns from the dissemination of his

⁷⁵¹ Pacific Model Law, clauses 7(2), (3). In Fiji's 5th Draft revision is regulated at clauses 6(2), (3) 14, 22, 24, 25, 29, 31, 40(3) (Sep. 2005).

⁷⁵² Pacific Model Law, clauses 9, 10. In Fiji's 5th Draft revision is regulated at clauses 9, 12(4) (Sep. 2005).

⁷⁵³ Explanatory Memorandum (2002) Outline of the Pacific Model Law, 1.

⁷⁵⁴ Pacific Model Law, Part 5. In Fiji's 5th Draft revision is regulated at Part 4, clauses 25-30 (Sep. 2005).

⁷⁵⁵ Explanatory Memorandum (2002) Outline of the Pacific Model Law, 2, Pacific Model Law, Part 3, clause 13, In Fiji's 5th Draft revision is regulated at clause 12(1-5) (Sep. 2005).

⁷⁵⁶ Rights of publication, paternity and integrity, which generally protects the work from distortion, alteration, or misinterpretation (see Berryman 1994).

works (Rajan 2001: 82; Berryman 1994: 301). Protection of moral rights (*droit moral*) is a concept still alien to the common law Anglo-Saxon system.⁷⁵⁷ Copyright *raison d'être* in common law countries is primarily concerned and favors the economic rights, encouraging creativity through economic incentive, permitting the exploitation of intellectual works under the best conditions possible (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 298), but using Callinson's words, "the songs, dances and stories of aboriginal people do not correspond with that fundamental purpose" (Callinson: 176, quoted in Rajan 2001: 89).

In addition, the moral rights protected under the Pacific Model Law could be interpreted as 'communal' moral rights,⁷⁵⁸ thus the creation of moral rights attaching to a tribe, clan, could sit alongside the individual copyright and moral rights of an artist (Dambiec 2005). However, the innovational inclusion of moral rights seems to contrast with the disposition contained in the Explanatory Memorandum, which states that if a derivative work is created intellectual property rights are fully respected, however the user of the derivative work should respect the traditional owners' moral rights. Thus, Forsyth argues, this creates restrictions on intellectual property rights and cannot be in accordance with the policy of fully respecting them (Forsyth 2003: 8).⁷⁵⁹

Building on a preliminary analysis of the Pacific Model Law conducted by Forsyth (2003), on the one hand the Pacific Model Law utilizing the South Pacific

⁷⁵⁷ In Canada moral rights have been acknowledged since 1931 in anticipation of the ratification of the Berne Convention, although they are separate from copyright. The US have a very limited explicit notion of moral rights. Section 106A of the United States Copyright Act gives authors of works of visual art certain rights to claim authorship and to prevent mutilation that would be prejudicial to honor or reputation. 17 U.S.C. 106A (2000) (Paterson and Karjala 2003: 641-2).

⁷⁵⁸ Although the Berne Convention established specific protection for attribution (*droit de paternité*) and integrity (*droit de respect l'oeuvre*) including joint authorship, the limit of such provision comes into play for collective traditional works of indigenous peoples, even if the original (joint) authors could be known (Paterson and Karjala 2003: 645)

⁷⁵⁹ The Tunis Model Law (1976) to avoid misunderstandings provides that if works derived from folklore they are treated as copyright works (WIPO Background Paper No.1, 2003: 76).

rationale for intellectual property protection making no distinction between tangible and intangible property, consciously impinges upon the ‘intellectual commons’ that lies at the heart of the western justification of intellectual property law. This was specifically recognized by the drafters of the law, who stated in the Explanatory Memorandum:

The approach taken in the [Pacific] model law is to create new rights in traditional knowledge and expressions of culture which previously might have been regarded, for the purpose of intellectual property law, as part of the public domain.⁷⁶⁰

On the other hand, the Pacific Model Law carefully positions itself to regulate only those uses of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture that are not regulated by either customary law or intellectual property rights.⁷⁶¹ The Pacific Model Law is retrospective in its application, and clearly utilizes the South Pacific rationale for intellectual property protection, making no distinction between the protection of tangible and intangible property, rather than the western justification of limited rights. The Pacific Model Law’s clause 11 is interesting but brings up critical questions.⁷⁶²

Traditional cultural rights in traditional knowledge and expressions of culture are in addition to, and do not affect, any rights that may subsist under any law relating copyright, trademarks, patents, designs or other intellectual property.⁷⁶³

Lucas-Schloetter believes that this clause implements the policy that the new rights established by the Pacific Model Law supplement and do not override intellectual property rights (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 283). On the other hand

⁷⁶⁰ Explanatory Memorandum (2002) Outline of the Pacific Model Law, 1.

⁷⁶¹ Explanatory Memorandum (2002) Outline of the Pacific Model Law, 1.

⁷⁶² In Fiji’s 5th Draft revision is regulated at clause 10 (Sep. 2005)

⁷⁶³ Pacific Model Law, clause 11 and Explanatory Memorandum (2002) Outline of the Pacific Model Law, 2.

Forsyth argues that in theory it seems that there is “a clear separation— intellectual property laws have ‘priority’ over the Pacific Model Law where a work falls under both their protection” (Forsyth 2003: 7).

On May 10 2005, the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture) and Ministry of Fijian Affairs Culture and Heritage, invited me to a discussion on the drafting process of the Pacific Model Law with Rupeni Nawaqakuta, the lawyer and First Parliamentary Counsel in charge of the Pacific Model Law revisions.⁷⁶⁴ In virtue of the principle of reciprocity, I was actually asked to give a talk on a comparative analysis of *sui generis* intellectual property rights present in other legislations, declarations and recent indigenous statements. However, differently from my meeting with the PIFS officers, this meeting and the round table of comments that followed my presentation were illuminating.

Glossing Forsyth (2003), clause 11 of the Pacific Model Law was on top of my agenda, when it came my turn to ask questions. There is a feeling of a basic contradiction, I said, for the policy of the Pacific Model Law appears to complement and not undermine intellectual property rights. The problem arises in practice in determining when and whether or not intellectual property protection applies, which is particularly problematic in the case of a copyright for which there is no system of registration, and for which there are no bright lines. Forsyth’s example is explanatory: “a new work is created that appears to fall under the copyright system. It is then alienated by the author to a third

⁷⁶⁴ Also present at the meeting were the Assistant Minister for Culture and Heritage, Mrs. Nagusuca, the Director of the Department of Culture and Heritage, Peni Cavuila, the Director of the Institute, Misiwaini Qereqeretabua, Mr. Sipiriano Nemani from the Institute, in charge of the National Inventory Project, and Mrs. Meretui Ratunabuabua, from the Department of Culture and Heritage. For a matter of confidentiality I will not reproduce the full text of the Fiji 5th Draft revision of the Pacific Model Law, but I will only refer to the comments about key clauses which emerged from the meeting.

party. Eventually it becomes clear that in fact the work is not protected by copyright but falls under the protection of the Pacific Model Law. An offence has therefore been committed by the alienation of the work. Given that such an offence can be punished by imprisonment, this is a serious consideration” (Forsyth 2003: 8).

Nawaqakuta answered saying that a priority to existing intellectual property laws was envisioned to protect the existing legal rights, especially considering that both traditional knowledge and expressions of culture are still regarded in law as something in the public domain, which would confirm Forsyth’s concern that it is due to international pressures to maintain the status quo (Forsyth *ibid.*). Nawaqakuta admitted that it seems absurd to go to court for a determination that a copyright exists in a work before the provisions of the Pacific Model Law could be safely dispensed with. He is thus expecting a conflict, although he declared that “this is just a bare bone of the Pacific Model Law, we actually haven’t put it to trial yet” (Nawaqakuta *pers. comm.*), thus only a trial period once the Pacific Model Law becomes a Bill, will show the possible ways out.

Another major point of concern is if protection of indigenous TKECs in Fiji has to emanate from a *sui generis* system originating from western model laws or from *within* the culture, from the traditional Fijian culture custodians themselves. Examples during the discussion were at the *Mataatua Declaration*, the *Julayinbul Statement on Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights* and the recent *Paoakalani Declaration*⁷⁶⁵ where the call to action is coming from the stakeholders themselves. The question is if and how the Pacific

⁷⁶⁵ *Paoakalani Declaration*, similarly but more extremely than the *Julayinbul Statement* adopts a narrative reflecting indigenous cosmology and relation to the land. “On October 3-5, 2003, Kanaka Maoli of Ka Pae ‘Āina Hawai‘i gathered at Ka ‘Aha Pono – Native Hawaiian Intellectual Property Rights Conference – and united to express our collective right of self-determination to perpetuate our culture under threat of theft and commercialization of the traditional knowledge of Kanaka Maoli, our *wahi pana and nā mea Hawai‘i*.” (Paoakalani Declaration, Conference Background, 2003).

Model Law interprets and incorporates indigenous voices.

Nawaqakuta's simple answer was that the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga's* (the Great Council of Chiefs) is in Fiji the *itaukei's* (ethnic Fijians) voice that protects them. The Great Council of Chiefs's voice (on whose boardroom our meeting was taking place) is heard through the Fijian Affairs Board,⁷⁶⁶ which is regarded as the guardian of the Fijian administrative system and many other aspects of Fijian custom. Fiji has liberally supported indigenous initiatives in the area of intellectual property rights, and absorbed the encouragements of the *Mataatua Declaration*, the *Julayinbul Statement on Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights* and the *Kari-Oca Declaration* for a decade. Precisely, since the *Suva Declaration* on Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights held in Suva in April 2005, discussed above.

Tensions in the country still exist, dictated by multiculturalism, modernity, but not oppression, an ongoing 'cold war' for framing the defining qualities of the Fijian nation. However, differently from their Hawaiian cousins, Fiji is still dominated by a Fijian-centric view, an ethnonationalism, where the chiefs remain a central element of indigenous Fijian society valorized and transformed under colonial rule. As Lindstrom & White predicted "just as the 'chief' once occupied a strategic position in colonial systems of indirect rule, so today he finds himself mediating local realities and larger spheres of national and transnational interaction. Far from premodern relics, the chiefs of modern Pacific states increasingly figure in the rhetoric and reality of national political development" (Lindstrom & White 1997: 3).

⁷⁶⁶ The Great Council of Chiefs advises the Government through the Minister for Fijian Affairs on matters affecting the Fijian people. It safeguards the interests of the Fijian people through its representatives in the Senate. It also appoints two members of the Fijian Affairs Board and five members of the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) (Kamikamica 1975: 140).

In the course of the meeting Ratunabuabua specified that regarding the Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill “there have been workshops at regional level bringing together the indigenous people from the Pacific and were heard voices concerned about putting culture in a box... At the moment after we have a look at the Pacific Model Law, we are going to take it out for and into the public domain to get feed back in form of workshops, at national and village level.” Nawaqakuta’s comment to the *Paoakalani Declaration* was in fact laconic. “The Hawaiians... it’s a declaration by the indigenous people... to say what...to be the voice of what?” His point was that even if the process of recognition of the safeguarding traditional knowledge and expressions of culture emanates from a *sui generis* system originating with the *itaukei* (the ethnic Fijians), changing the western narrative and adopting indigenous language and cosmology, in order to achieve that “you just leave it to the formal practice of the law to protect them” (Nawaqakuta pers. comm.)⁷⁶⁷

In other words, even in the hypothesis of having a Sovereign Nation of Hawai‘i, completely independent from any western power, the *Paoakalani Declaration* would have to undergo a legislative consensus in order to become law, otherwise it remains just an unenforceable statement devoid of any binding force. The point is that declarations, resolutions and statements are often drawn up by academicians, intergovernmental agencies and people’s organizations often resulting from local, regional or international conferences. For example, Conway-Jones, who was involved in the drafting of the *Paoakalani Declaration*, argues that, “cultural heritage has to emanate from a *sui generis* system originating with Native Hawaiians, not from Western intellectual property laws”

⁷⁶⁷ Interview April 10 2005 h. 10:30, Suva.

and that “The *Declaration* provides the framework for a foundational understanding of the relationship that Hawaiians have with the land and other traditional and cultural resources” (Conway-Jones 2005: 103, 110).

The Pacific Model Law was adopted by Fiji, but not initiated there, so it is not an indigenous declaration. This made some indigenous scholars skeptical that if the law did not come directly from the local stakeholders, it would subvert indigenous freedom of expression. The Pacific Model Law is not an indigenous declaration, nevertheless it found fertile ground in a country where the *vanua* (land) and *vakavanua* (customs) are treasured. In April 1995, the South Pacific Regional Consultation on Indigenous Peoples, Knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights, was held in Suva, Fiji (*Suva Declaration*). Since then, Fiji has supported indigenous initiatives to protect intellectual property and absorbed the encouragements of the *Mataatua Declaration*, the *Julayinbul Statement on Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights* and the *Kari-Oca Declaration*.⁷⁶⁸

Both processes of the *Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki* (National Inventory on Traditional Fijian Knowledge and Expressions of Culture) and the Pacific Model Law revisions have been embraced and supported more than in any other Pacific Island nation. Nawaqakuta believes that Fiji should then “go ahead with the basis of the legislation and then it’ll take another two or three for us years to test it out and maybe change certain provisions, because we might find them difficult in practice... we are realizing that the people are the voice... the people may say: oh, this or that are not covered in the legislation.” At the meeting, I remembering bringing up Riley’s comment, advocating a copyright law which “is flexible enough to include the oral works of

⁷⁶⁸ See discussion in the previous chapter.

indigenous groups, mandates that disputes over the construction of the term ‘collective indigenous work’ be resolved in a tribal court, subject to the interpretation by tribal law, customary law and customs” (Riley 2000: 216). Nawaqakuta immediately replied that Fiji was currently evaluating the re-establishment of Fijian courts, while Fiji’s legislation does recognize customs and customary laws.⁷⁶⁹

In the first chapter I developed the concept of the ‘ethnographic contract’ and discussed Posey’s “new code of eco-ethno ethics” (Posey 1990, 2004). A critical issue regards the Pacific Model Law provisions about a dual way to obtain authorization and the establishment of a Code of Ethics. The Pacific Model Law contains detailed provisions to ensure that TKEC is only dealt with in a non-customary way after prior and informed consent has been obtained from the traditional owners. It provides two ways of seeking authorization: directly through a traditional owner and indirectly through a Cultural Authority,⁷⁷⁰ who is the administrator and enforcer of the Pacific Model Law. The organic clauses, which set up the regulative or bureaucratic institutions to implement the provisions, i.e., the Cultural Authority, are thus vital.

My question was if such Cultural Authority should have to borrow authority by being appointed by the Great Council of Chiefs, ubiquitous symbol of ‘custom’ representing the indigenous and traditional in contrast with the foreign and modern (see White 1992: 75; Lawson 1997: 109). Nawaqakuta confirmed that the voice of the Great Council of Chiefs (on whose boardroom our meeting was taking place) will be critical for matters of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions is a sensitive subject for them. The voice of the chiefs will be heard through the Fijian Affairs Board, although

⁷⁶⁹ See discussion in the previous chapter.

⁷⁷⁰ Pacific Model Law, Part 7. In Fiji’s 5th Draft revision is regulated at Part 5 (Sep. 2005).

the Cultural Authority will be a Chair person and four other members, not some kind of new ‘Ministry’, but a three member board appointed by the Minister who will be given the responsibility for this Act, “in consultation with the *Bose Levu Vakaturga* (Great Council of Chiefs)”.⁷⁷¹ The same board will develop a Code of Ethics in relation to use of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture,⁷⁷² and maintain a record of traditional owners or knowledge and expressions of culture.⁷⁷³

Among the functions of the Cultural Authority are: to receive and process applications; to monitor compliance with authorised user agreements and to advise traditional owners of any breaches of such agreements; to develop standard terms and conditions for authorised user agreements; to provide training and education programs for traditional owners and users of traditional knowledge or expressions of culture;

Besides some minor shifting of the clauses between the Pacific Model Law and Fiji’s Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill, in the latter I note a larger emphasis on obtaining prior informed consent. “[...] traditional owners have the right [...] to require prior consent in relation to non-customary use of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture (whether or not such use is of a commercial nature)”,⁷⁷⁴ paired by a general prohibition “A person shall not except in accordance with the provisions of this Part, use any traditional knowledge or expressions of culture for non-customary purpose (whether or not such purpose is of a commercial nature)”,⁷⁷⁵ immediately followed by a new provision not present in the Pacific Model Law: “A person who

⁷⁷¹ Possibly the Minister for Fijian Affairs (Nemani 2006, pers. comm.). In Fiji’s 5th Draft revision is regulated at 34(b) (Sep. 2005).

⁷⁷² Introduced by Fiji’s 5th Draft revision at Part 5, clause 35(e) (Sep. 2005).

⁷⁷³ Pacific Model Law, Part 7, clause 37(h); In Fiji’s 5th Draft revision is regulated at Part 5, clause 35(h) (Sep. 2005).

⁷⁷⁴ Clause 6(2) (Fiji’s 5th Draft revision Sep. 2005).

⁷⁷⁵ Clause 13(1) (Fiji’s 5th Draft revision Sep. 2005).

contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$50,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or to both”.⁷⁷⁶

Moreover, a particular attention, both in the draft and during my meeting emerged on the part related to the offences, in relation to traditional cultural rights, moral rights, sacred-secret material and importation and exportation.

Conclusion

From the previous analyses we may deduce that intellectual property laws are generally inappropriate and inadequate for defending the rights and resources of traditional communities. Intellectual property rights protection is purely mercantile, whereas the interests of indigenous peoples are only partly economic and more linked to self-determination. Drawing on the discussion about the nature of ‘mental resources’ in Euro-American societies, the modern industrial economy tends to lay stress on material resources and productive capacity (Küchler 1999: 62 quoted in Strathern 2005: 150). Thus, the reproduction of mental products becomes governed by a legal system in which intangible efforts have to be embodied in things for rights to be exercised over them (Strathern *ibid.*).

We have seen that international agreements are a trade off and often are consistent with the goals of certain private western industries. For example, Conway-Jones argues that with the passage of TRIPS Agreement member states legitimized the global proliferation of the principle of ‘cultural commodification’, to the delight of private industry, but equally to the dismay of developing

⁷⁷⁶ Clause 13(2) (Fiji’s 5th Draft revision Sep. 2005).

countries, and more saliently, Indigenous Peoples.” (Conway-Jones 2004: 122). Moreover, the lack of economic self-sufficiency of indigenous peoples and the unequal power relations between themselves and the corporate world would make it very difficult for indigenous communities to defend their intellectual property rights.

From the discussions above, it emerges that indigenous organizations are becoming more aware of intellectual property rights issues and understand that although their use may be in certain circumstances examined by this chapter, beneficial, it is necessary to look beyond them and consider alternative systems of protection, compensation, and self-determination. In this sense, strategies for raising awareness for the potential and the limitations of intellectual property rights laws are fundamental in the process of creating and implementing alternative systems of protection.

The absence of protection of rights for traditional dance and ritual performances under intellectual property law has left indigenous peoples no other choice but to look elsewhere for protection (Janke 2003: 96). The recent *Consolidated Analysis of the Legal Protection of Traditional Cultural Expressions/Expressions of Folklore* (2003), published by WIPO, observes that there are many electronic databases of traditional cultural expressions throughout the world (including CD-ROM and DVD).⁷⁷⁷ Cultural heritage programs at the international, regional and national levels are more frequently establishing registers, lists and inventories of intangible and tangible cultural heritage as useful

⁷⁷⁷ Background Paper No.1, 2003: 69.

tools for its identification, promotion and safeguarding.

More precisely, those states which have established, or are in the process of establishing *sui generis* systems for the legal protection of traditional cultural expressions, have also created, or are planning, a documentation and registration system. In the previous chapter we have seen that Fiji's *Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki* (National Inventory on Traditional Fijian Knowledge and Expressions of Culture), is one example among a series of upcoming initiatives 'inspired' by the International Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage launched by UNESCO in 2003.

The major concern is that database protection, under copyright law, does not protect the contents of the database. Therefore, the protection in question would not apply to the expressions of culture in the database, but only to their publication or presentation in the form of a collection, anthology or compilation. There would be nothing, therefore, to prevent a non-indigenous person from extracting a traditional song, dance, performance and reproducing, adapting and commercializing it. However, the prospect of a *sui generis* database protection may have application in this area. It is possible that collections and databases of traditional expressions of culture made by the relevant communities, could be protected under proposals for *sui generis* database protection, like in the case of the Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill in Fiji.

This novel instrument, analyzed in the previous section, establishes for the first time in the region new communal, perpetual, inalienable exclusive moral and traditional cultural rights, which are closely related to intellectual property rights but distinct therefrom, which for purposes of intellectual property law might formerly have been

regarded as part of the public domain and whose existence does not depend upon registration or other formalities. Inevitably, it is gaining momentum in the Pacific region, although, in Nawakaquta's⁷⁷⁸ and other commentators' words (see Lucas-Schloetter 2003: 284), in order to assess its value, it will require a 'trial period' in Fiji, Palau and in the other Pacific Island countries in the process of implementing it.⁷⁷⁹

Brown warns that "the wild card in the movement to protect expressions of traditional heritage is simmering resentment about the developed world's intellectual property practice. The UNESCO Convention calls for heritage to be documented and protected. Once heritage is documented, however, it is more readily commandeered by musicians, novelists, pharmaceutical companies, the motion-picture industry" (Brown 2003: 1). As discussed in the previous chapter, Fiji's *Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki* inventory is not taking the form of a portal of online databases accessible to persons outside the circle of persons from the indigenous community who share the secret, the knowledge.

The *Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki* acknowledges the fact that confidential information would be lost as soon as knowledge were made available beyond the circle of persons. The *Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki* is aware that even in the case where TKEC are already in the public domain (e.g., the *vilavilairevo*), its inclusion in publicly accessible databases may actually have a harmful and negative effect on the continuous

⁷⁷⁸ May 10 2005 discussion on the drafting process of the Pacific Model Law.

⁷⁷⁹ In the course of the meeting with the First Parliamentary Counsel, Rupeni Nawakaquta, we took vision of Palau's Draft Bill for the Protection and Promotion of Traditional Expressions of Culture.

development of the underlying traditional expressions of culture.

Nemani has recently commented on Brown's point arguing that he believes "he is referring to India [database]. Fiji's database as I've continuously mentioned is restricted with no public access except with the authority of the owners...in Fiji's database, the people are still the traditional owners, and are still the Creators and Makers, the Institute is acting only as a facilitator and the provision of safe-keeping measures of all their TKEC." (Nemani pers. comm.)⁷⁸⁰

Lucas-Schloetter (2004) quotes the statement of Australian author Jabbour, who more than twenty years ago wrote that:

Protecting folklore means essentially acknowledging an intermediate sphere of intellectual property rights between individual rights, on the one hand, and the national or international public domain on the other. In terms of legal history and legal frameworks, this is a radical idea. (Jabbour 1983: 13)

Lucas-Schloetter argues that emphasis should be given to "the importance of identifying and inventorying the expressions of folklore as a prior condition for any legal protection. This is a *sine qua non* for any discussion on the ideal mode of protection for expressions of folklore." (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 367).

From my observation in Fiji, and my enduring experience in Beqa among the *yavusa* Sawau and Naivilaqata custodians, I believe that besides identifying traditional cultural expressions we should also identify their traditional owners. "The prime objective of Fiji's database is to identify the traditional owners." (Nemani 2006: pers. comm).⁷⁸¹ The important shift in the concept of intangible heritage has been to include not only the masterpieces, but also the masters

⁷⁸⁰ Email 28 January 2006.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

(Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 57).⁷⁸²

In other words, the objective is to assure dignity first, and not just bare ‘enhanced’ ownership rights. In the next chapter I will argue that before any inventorying, the *sine qua non* element is the awareness and involvement of the traditional owners, building consensus on goals, research capacity, and ultimately framing the new law through a communal determination entrusted and endorsed by the chiefly commencing from the village level, before reaching the imprimatur of the Parliament. These dialogues may help answering Brown’s question, mentioned in the previous chapter: “How can we promote respectful treatment of native cultures and indigenous forms of self-expression within mass societies?” (Brown 2003: 10).

Recently, Riles in her analysis on the nature and effects legal systems that provide for separate bodies of “Native” and “European” law, identified in Fiji two contrasting genres of law, which roughly correspond to distinct bodies of Native Law and European Law. She respectively calls them “expressive” and “instrumental”, the first based upon Native law, the second on European law (Riles 2003: 191). Although Riles separates the two genres in her discussion, she observes that every act of lawmaking and encounter with legal procedures entails sequentially both expressive and instrumental genres (Riles 2003: 205). In fact, juxtaposing these two genres to the Pacific Model Law, I am tempted to say that the Fiji’s *sui generis* attempts of protection of their TKEC are neither purely ‘expressive’, nor purely ‘instrumental’. In other words, these legislative processes are neither purely self-reflexive, nor manifestly ‘objectifying’. If the requirement of a label

⁷⁸² See previous chapter about The Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity UNESCO Program.

would eventually emerge in the post-colonial discourse of legal formalisms, I would suggest a third genre, springing from those two, which I will call ‘consequential’.

Drawing on Strathern, this third genre creates communities by producing significations about them and at the same time it creates ‘documents’ and ‘verdicts’ that do not represent but instantiate a community’s rights, sequential responses to one another (Strathern 2005: 85). Although consequentialism per se may appear as the trading off of some rights fulfillment for others—which is a large part of what a legal system does, it could be also read as a sign of the incipient appearance in Fiji’s milieu of a global civil society and of the awareness of traditional transcultural rights. Riles in fact concludes her argument whispering in our ears that there are “consequences to this imagination of law as an instrument, as a means toward some other end, whether the end is social justice (for example, Kelly & Kaplan 2001) or economic efficiency (for example, Posner 2003)” (Riles 2003: 209); or, let me add, IP-based *sui generis* protection, as the previous discussions and the next chapter exemplify.

CHAPTER 8

The Sawau Project: An Indigenous Response to the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Beqa

Introduction: Tribal Lawyers

In the summer of 2004, a few weeks before leaving for Fiji, Rotuman scholar and filmmaker Vilsoni Hereniko suggested that I switch hats upon landing in Beqa: take off the anthropologist's pith helmet and put on the lawyer's wig I had worn before joining the Department of Anthropology in Fall 2000. That is, he metaphorically invited me to take an active part in representing the Sawau firewalkers, for example in their negotiations with the hotels and travel agencies that exploit their performances. After experiencing a momentary confusion of boundaries, I realized that if I attempted to represent them, I would be risking to misrepresent myself. I would also be contravening the ethical standards of both the European and American Bar Associations and the American Anthropological Association, not to mention the rules of the Fiji Law Society and the Department of Immigration and, most importantly, the customary Sawau *vakavanua* (norms of conduct) I was about to study.

In Chapter 2, I argued that the modern ethnographer should do more than 'do no harm' and not get involved. However, for me to shift from cultural translator to tribal lawyer would be quite a leap. The last couple of chapters have shown that the need for tribal lawyers has never been greater, as indigenous communities struggle to survive and maintain their sovereignty and possession of their tangible and intangible cultural heritage, but I believe that it is critical that *their* lawyers be trained in the law and

customs of the tribes they represent.⁷⁸³

Anthropologists are not lawyers, although Geertz once wrote that both the lawyer and the anthropologist are connoisseurs of specific cases; both are absorbed in finding universal principles in minute facts and both arts are performed within the context of local knowledge (Geertz 1973). For an anthropologist with a law practice background and an interest in cultural property, the ‘minute facts’ of the Sawau case holds tremendous interest. Reconsidering Hereniko’s advice, instead of walking with the Sawau tribe’s representatives to the nearest court, I imagined I would do something better: participate in the legislative process of protection of traditional knowledge and cultural heritage at the national (Fiji) and international (UNESCO) levels, while getting acquainted with the relevant mechanisms of protecting traditional cultural expressions (TCE) and traditional knowledge (TK). I argue that advocacy is often circumstantial, but should never be separated from ethics in anthropology. Thus, without trying to inculcate unrealistic aspirations in the community or promising grand changes, I realized that with the assistance of the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (IFLC), I could use my legal experience to encourage the Sawau community to build research capabilities concerning their cultural property.

During the course of my research in Beqa, I also realized that the usual logocentric approach of representing the complex realities of fieldwork in a notebook and then transforming those words into an ethnography denied much of the multi-sensory experience of the culture I was studying. Working on *The Sawau Project* necessitated

⁷⁸³ Great examples of such tribal lawyers include Maui Solomon in Aotearoa, Clark Peteru in Samoa, and Robert B. Porter II, a Seneca Indian and Harvard Law School graduate who returned to the Allegheny Indian Reservation where he grew up to become the Seneca Nation's first attorney general.

developing new methodologies in response to the Sawau's demand for some sort of social intervention. *The Sawau Project* is a unique genre. It is not a 'disappearing world' documentary where the anthropologist is a consultant to a television crew and the social intervention lies in educating foreigners about an exotic culture and evoking empathy for 'glamorous' ethnographic filmmaking (Banks and Morphy 1997). Without being a 'documentary film', it is instead a montage of 'documents' that uses persuasive images and participatory multi-media technology to give a face and voice to the Sawau's intangible cultural patrimony.

Visual methods should be by nature collaborative, but it is the approach of the researcher not the application of the method that makes research mutually beneficial. One goal of anthropological research should be to produce a loyal and reflexive account of other people's experience, based on collaboration and recognition of the intersubjectivity of the research encounter (Pink 2002). I concur that, "where locally accepted, a camera can be an extremely important research tool" (Beebe 2002: 80, quoted by Pink 2004: 5), but it can also become the basis for a more collaborative agenda. Once the anthropologist clarifies his or her intentions, listens to native desires and permits native researchers to become his or her allies, it becomes possible to leave behind academic and strategic debates over power relations between indigenous peoples and anthropologists, insiders and outsiders, colonizers and colonized. The camera, more than the written word, presents an opportunity for complementary roles and relationships in the field.

Visual anthropological research and representations also raise ethical issues that do not figure in written anthropology. The researcher must discover how visual meanings or truths are inferred by stakeholders and how they will decide to use and

permit access to visual data (Pink 2001, 2004). This results in what Jean Rouch calls *anthropologie partagée* (shared anthropology), a method of research that consists of sharing analysis with the people who previously were only the objects of study (Rouch 2003 quoted in Feld 2003: 18). The risk, as visual ethnography scholars Barbash and Taylor point out, is that “the film maker will remain the real author, with the participants simply being brought in to legitimate a collaborative rubber stamp” (Barbash & Taylor 1997: 89). In the case of *The Sawau Project*, however, my participation was largely incidental. My research materials were incorporated into a project established locally for local purposes. As described below, *The Sawau Project: An Indigenous Response to the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Beqa* thus represents a conjunction between applied, visual and legal anthropologies.

Local Knowledge, Global Commons

A central issue of intellectual property rights is delimiting the boundaries of property interest embodied in intangible *res*. As discussed in Chapter 7, when protected by law, the intangible aspects of the creations of the human mind constitute intellectual property (Scafidi 2001). Due to the creation of innovational commons such as the Internet, there have been increased discourses on “free culture” that falls outside the realm of intellectual property; many people are arguing that it is in the interest of the general public to lift as many embargos as possible in order to stimulate research and creativity and increase economic growth (Lessig 2004). These views exacerbate an imbalance of power over property rights for indigenous peoples such as the Sawau who are struggling to retain control and protect the use of their traditional cultural expressions.

Intangible cultural heritage appears more fragile and vulnerable than other forms of heritage, for it hinges on actors and socio-environmental conditions that are subject to capricious, unforeseeable change.

Chapter 7 showed that Sawau cultural expressions are inalienable possessions freely circulating among their custodians. However, outside this society, they represent exactly what Lessig (2004) demonizes: an enclosed domain, a monopolized culture and cultural expressions that no one is allowed to use without the permission of their owners and creators. While traditional knowledge and cultural property *per se* are concerned with the cost of access to some informational resources, the amorphous public domain creates an incentive for costless access to material that is unprotected by intellectual property rights, permissible to anyone, freely misappropriated, copied and performed. Ironically, such appropriations are often rebundled into ‘new’ creations covered by intellectual property rights (Boyle 2003).

I have argued in previous chapters that a denial of ownership concepts in indigenous and local communities could nourish the assumption that traditional knowledge is and should remain part of the public domain (Dutfield 2004, 2000). A limited term of protection, or no protection at all, means that most indigenous cultural expressions and works may be in the public domain regardless if their forms and symbols date back to a time immemorial. The problem is that in most traditional communities, knowledge is acquired over time and passed on from one generation to the next. Through this process, it keeps evolving and changing character. Therefore, it is difficult to establish *when* such knowledge was actually discovered or created and *when* it entered the public domain. Once it enters the public domain, however, anyone is free to

reproduce it.

The goal of self-determination means that indigenous people are not particularly longing to be part of the global commons. The public domain may impoverish or annihilate their own concept of cultural property “because it defines traditional knowledge as a freely available resource” (Brown 2003: 237). Part of the difficulty is that the elastic, often overlapping terms ‘public domain’ and ‘commons’ are used inconsistently and remain enigmatic. Litman defines public domain as “a commons that includes those aspects of copyrighted works which copyright does not protect” (1990: 968). Coombe, however, suggests that a *cultural* public domain requires us to “consider a wider range of activities and practices than those that copyright law traditionally recognized as acts of authorship and those most characteristic of Western creators” (2003: 1181). Furthermore,

A more inclusive public domain must acknowledge a wider range of social relationships than is recognized by fair use and freedom of speech. The cultural survival of peoples demands that we formulate new principles governing the use of cultural heritage to ensure the conditions necessary to foster diverse forms of cultural creativity. (Coombe 2005: 35)

One question I have often been asked is how the public domain as a form of ‘nonproperty’ affects the lives of indigenous people such as the Sawau and why is it important now? James Boyle (2003) argues persuasively that a few centuries ago indigenous songs, dances, performances, rituals and ideas did not need any intellectual property protection, for they maintained ‘physical control’ over their heritage. However, as of a few years ago, with advent of the Internet, they would need to apply the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, the No Electronic Theft Act, The Sonny Bono Term Extension Act, and perhaps even the Collections of Information Antipiracy Act (Boyle

2003: 42). Zimmerman & Zimmerman and Bruguier (2000) observe that the proliferation of websites is making it difficult to distinguish pages developed by indigenous communities from those developed by ‘wannabes’ (see Chapter 5).⁷⁸⁴ Michael Two Horses, a Sioux Lakota from the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota mixed humor and vexation in developing a *Wanabi Tribe* home page listing “those sites run by non-Indians engaging in activities injurious to Indian self-definition and self-determination and” (Tesunkenupa 1998 quoted in Zimmerman et al. 2000: 83).

Lessig enthusiastically describes Central Park as “a commons: an extraordinary resource of peacefulness in the center of a city that is anything but; an escape and refuge, that anyone can take and use without the permission of anyone else” (Lessig 2002: 1783). A Fijian village or island, or anywhere in the Pacific Island Nations, is not like Central Park. Everybody is required to have an invitation or obtain permission to enter a Fijian village; the same applies to Fiji’s cultural heritage. In *Free Culture*, Lessig argues that the Internet “has unleashed extraordinary possibilities for many to participate in the process of building and cultivating culture that reaches far beyond local boundaries” (2004: 9). He never mentions the fate of indigenous cultures when such boundaries are breached, however. The Internet may be touted as the greatest example of democracy ever invented by humankind, but as Lessig (2004) notes, it has no capacity to punish those who steal cultural property from others.

The previous chapter has shown that the western formulation of intellectual property rights is problematic for indigenous peoples for several reasons already

⁷⁸⁴ I periodically checked Google for the number of results for the words ‘Sawau’ and ‘Beqa’. When we searched them the first time in Fiji with *Ratu* Felix Colatanavanua in May 2005 we received 293 results, when I tried in January 2006 they had become 350, and when I checked again in October 2006 they went up to 392.

discussed. The picture is even further complicated. Following the publication of Brown's (1998) article, "Can Culture Be Copyrighted?", both Posey (1998) and Coombe (1998) objected that he had reduced intellectual property rights to a question of copyright protection when most indigenous groups are more concerned about patents and trademarks. A growing number of indigenous groups, such as the Sawau tribe, who have already commodified aspects of their culture, are manifesting hybrid behavior in seeking control over their cultural property. While they may overtly criticize corporate capitalism and ghettoization, they have no choice but to embrace capitalism's commodifying logic and copyright laws (Boyle 2003). As Arno observes, once expressions of culture are protected by copyright, patent and trademark laws, "they could be bought and sold like material objects and contractual obligations, conceptualized as private property in the mode of classic capitalism" (2005: 59). As the old saying goes, "You cannot have your cake and eat it too."

There is no easy exit from this dilemma, which Brown appropriately calls a "cul-de-sac" (2003a: 237). The western copyright doctrine presents myriad obstacles to the full protection of indigenous expressions of culture. Geographic Indications, Trademarks and Certification and Authentication Marks such as the Māori *Toi-Iho* and the Indigenous Label of Authenticity are certainly signs of progress and generate pride in local communities, but remain mere 'add-ons'.⁷⁸⁵ They can be used to educate the public about indigenous art and culture, but they cannot stop imitations from being made; they only

⁷⁸⁵ The *Toi-Iho* certificati mark has been registered by Creative NZ, a New Zealand government agency that intends to eventually transfer it to a Māori-run body (Solomon pers. comm. July 29, 2006 h. 12:30, UHM; see Gray 2005: 92).

Fiji is currently working on a Label of Authenticity similar to the label developed by the National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association (NIAAA) with the backing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and the Australia Council for the Arts in late 1999.

clarify which items are protected as ‘authentic’ and which ones are ‘imitations’.

Obtaining even these protections is costly and they are difficult to enforce and require the informed consent of the entire particular indigenous community. A further concern among indigenous artists is that labeling certain works ‘authentic’ implies that other indigenous cultural and artistic products not bearing the labels of authenticity are somehow ‘inauthentic’; this potentially divides the indigenous artistic community (Lucas-Schloetter 2004: 311; Wiseman 2001: 20-1; 2000: 271).

As outlined in the Chapter 7, other attempts to protect cultural property include the so-called Performers’ Neighboring Rights and Unfair Competition as recognized in the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT). Unfortunately, these measures do not extend to the ‘visual’ part of performance; only the ‘aural’ part is protected. Unfair Competition rules are included in the legislation of several nations, the *Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property* (Art.10bis) and the TRIPS Agreement (Art. 2.1), however Unfair Competition is in principle limited to commercial transactions, which does not always apply to folklore.

The usefulness of the WPPT is also extremely limited as far as traditional cultural expressions are concerned. The ‘folkloric’ variables of ‘neighboring rights’ are identical to those in authors’ rights (Palethorpe & Verhulst 2000: 32). Indigenous performers trying obtain protection under these laws would find themselves dealing with the same issues in authors’ rights, such as originality, fixation and duration. The *Bellagio Declaration*, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1993, proposes to reduce the scope of intellectual property rights while creating new protection for traditional cultural expressions and knowledge. Unfortunately, it remains quite vague about the details of the

‘neighboring rights’ that would protect the content of indigenous culture (Brown 2003: 238). Moreover, the *Declaration* stresses the importance of maintaining and even extending the public domain or the intellectual and cultural commons in favor of utopian “fair use” and of “those who have been excluded by the authorial biases of current law.”⁷⁸⁶ The *Declaration* underestimates the fact that misappropriation, misuse and misrepresentation of indigenous property are often associated with what is freely available in the public domain.

Such intellectual property rights conventions and indigenous declarations of cultural rights are often unenforceable ‘soft laws’. They do not establish the term of protection or provide any protection against unauthorized performance or fixation, reproduction, or broadcasting and other communication to the public of traditional cultural forms (e.g., *Rome Convention*, 1961). They may be vague in referring to unspecified “works of folklore” (e.g., Art. 15(4) of the *Berne Convention*, 1967) and fail to protect the moral rights of the authors while contributing to commodification of cultural property (e.g., TRIPS, Art. 2.1; 14.1; 39. 3).

As the previous chapter shows, the majority of analyses of the protection of traditional cultural expressions conclude that intellectual property law is unsuitable and that new *sui generis* rights should be established and enforced. Intellectual Property attorney Angela Riley observes that any attempt to amend intellectual property laws to allow indigenous knowledge and cultural expressions to be copyrightable would face the

⁷⁸⁶ “In general, we favor increased recognition and protection of the public domain. We call on the international community to expand the public domain through expansive application of concepts of ‘fair use’, compulsory licensing, and narrower initial coverage of property rights in the first place. But since existing author-focused regimes are blind to the interests of non-authorial producers as well as to the importance of the commons, the main exception to this expansion of the public domain should be in favor of those who have been excluded by the authorial biases of current law” (Bellagio Declaration, 1993).

most profound criticism. She advocates that cultural property be placed instead back into the hands of indigenous peoples. To ensure that the cultural symbols and intangible property of indigenous peoples are respected, she argues that a progressive group-rights framework would be the best guarantor of indigenous cultural survival (Riley 2000: 205-6, 224).

Greek jurist Erica-Irene Daes' (1997a) report on *The Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous People* was a "turning point" in defining cultural property rights (Strathern & Hirsch 2004).⁷⁸⁷ While acknowledging the overwhelming complexity of the task and the confidentiality of much the information, Daes argues that an essential step in the identification and recovery of cultural property would be inventorying all the tangible and intangible items constituting a group's heritage, as identified and determined by the indigenous people themselves. In *Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples*, Daes stresses that in order to be effective, the protection of indigenous heritage should be based broadly on the principle of self-determination, which includes the right of indigenous peoples to maintain and develop their own culture, knowledge and forms of social organization.⁷⁸⁸ Indigenous peoples should be the sources, guardians and interpreters of their heritage, whether created in the past or developed in the future. Indigenous peoples' ownership and custody of their heritage should be collective, permanent and inalienable, or as prescribed by the customs,

⁷⁸⁷ Her report emerged from *The Study on the Protection of the Cultural and Intellectual Property of Indigenous Peoples* initiated in 1992 and presented in 1994 at the 46th Session of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

⁷⁸⁸ See Annex I, §2. Daes discussed this during a seminar held by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 52nd Session, Report of the Seminar on the Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples, Geneva, 28 February - 1 March 2000 (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/26, Annex I).

rules and practices of each people (Daes 2000a).

The reality is that “indigenous peoples do not view their heritage in terms of property at all ... but in terms of community and individual responsibility.... For indigenous peoples, heritage is a bundle of relationships, rather than a bundle of economic rights” (Daes 1993, 1997)⁷⁸⁹. As I have previously argued, the Sawau’s *vilavilarevo* ceremony is more about ‘custodianship’ rather than ‘ownership’ (Manek & Lettington 2001). The Sawau people share a sense of collective responsibility and identity regarding their traditional cultural expressions. Maybe the persistence of such ‘collective responsibilities’ is the major reason why the formal intellectual property system produces inappropriate results (Dutfield 2003).

The Sawau Project

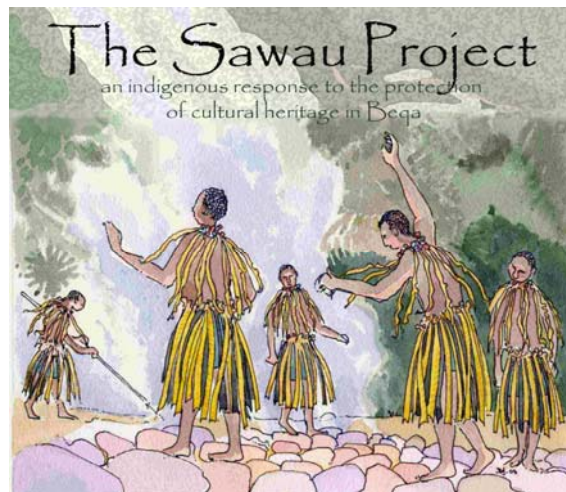


Figure 8.1 The jacket of the DVD.
Illustration by David R.W. Hamilton-Jones

⁷⁸⁹ This statement used by Daes in several occasions became proverbial.



Figure 8.2 Reverse of the jacket, digitally elaborated by Felix Colatanavanua.

The Sawau Project began in November 2004 as homework assigned by five teachers at the Sawau District School in Beqa. The initial goal was to identify what their pupils saw as important elements defining their own cultural heritage, a sort of digital version of Daniel Kelin's (2003) *Marshall Islands Legends and Stories*. Integrating cultural heritage projects into the school's curriculum was expected to stimulate younger generations to become more interested in Fijian culture and language.⁷⁹⁰ However, during the course of my ethnography I came to realize that the concerns were not confined to the children's customs oblivion, but were deeply informed in the Sawau's identity, in the form of abuse, misuse, misrepresentation, misconception, distortion, misappropriation, competition of their cultural heritage.

I had already collected many photographs, audio recordings and action footage during my fieldwork, intended as *aides-de-mémoire*. Informed by my reflexive, epistemological concern to show how I was constructing and negotiating my interpretations during my research, I had shared these research materials with performers

⁷⁹⁰ The Ministry of Education in Fiji does not have any specific curricula intended to help indigenous Fijian students maintain their traditional identity (Ewins 1998: 131).

and key informants to elicit their comments. Soon we all realized that my research material could be communally shared and collaboratively transformed into a unique representational genre. We decided to use the DVD format which permitted the development of a multimedia, multivocal, multilinear tool with enormous storage capacity and a menu-driven narrative that would allow the viewer to choose from among a succession of images, providing quick access to different sections of a story map connected by hyperlinks to written texts and a topographic map of the island of Beqa (see Biella 1993, 1994; Pink 2001).

A one-minute prototype was created with help from Christopher Robbins at the Media Centre of the University of the South Pacific. I took it to the Fiji Museum, The Media Centre of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Office in Suva, and The Ministry of Information, Communications and Media Relations. The Institute of Fijian Language and Culture expressed interest in the project; it was then promptly endorsed by the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage and Provincial Development in conjunction with the national project to establish legislation to protect traditional knowledge and expressions of culture.⁷⁹¹

At this point, it was opportune to ask Ratu Felix Colatanavanua to envision how

⁷⁹¹ Technical, linguistic and moral support for the project soon came from a variety of other sources, including: Nanise Nagasuca (Assistant Minister for Culture & Heritage), Sipiriano Nemani (*Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti*), Meretui Ratunabuabua (Department of Culture & Heritage), Asenaca Talova Bainivualiku (Ministry of Education, Research & Development Section), Epeli Hau'ofa (Oceania Centre for Arts & Culture), Susanne Pohler (Marine Studies Programme, University of the South Pacific), Alan Lifton and Melanie Guiney (Media Centre, University of the South Pacific), Kifle Kahsai (Department of Geology, University of the South Pacific), Gennady Gienko (Department of Geography, University of the South Pacific), Paul Geraghty (Department of Literature and Language, University of the South Pacific), Ilaitia Kurucake Caginavanua (Native Land Trust Board), Salesia Ikaniwai (Fiji National Archives), Konai Helu-Thaman (Unesco Chair in Pacific Education and Culture); and Ratu Alipate Mataitoga and Lunia Bogi (Fiji Film & TV Unit, Ministry of Information, Communication & Media Relations).

to visually represent the Sawau heritage. He had returned from living in Canada, where he had been working in film production, about the same time I arrived in Beqa. *The Sawau Project* intersected with his desire, and that of his mother, the Tui Sawau's sister Bulou Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga (also recently returned from England), to take up responsibility for their *vanua*, their people and the land. Felix began choosing and editing footage and adding and digitally animating his own photographs. With the consent of the chief and the Sawau *mataqali* members, the desired result of *The Sawau Project* became to prevent misuse, misinterpretation and misconception of the Sawau's cultural heritage (mainly the *vilavilavevo* firewalking ceremony), offering a *sui generis*, *in situ*, rhizomatic approach to intellectual property strategies for positive protection (see Appendix L for Statement of Purpose).



Figure 8.3 First menu of *The Sawau Project*.

Producing *The Sawau Project* consisted of constantly showing, discussing and creating a montage of images according to community feedback on their appropriateness. Ratu Felix Colatanavanua was involved in every aspect of creation of this montage; he edited the musical arrangements, animated visual effects and built the DVD's multilinear

interface.⁷⁹² *The Sawau Project* is a ‘story map’ that allows viewers to scroll and select their path through the cultural data assembled. Community members are also able to add more ‘memories’ in the form of photographs and video footage.

Version 1.0 of the DVD starts with opening credits that automatically load to a screen with an interlocutory menu displayed below a collage of four negative images of a *Vilavilatrevo* performance (Fig. 8.3).



Figure 8.4 Felix Colatanavanua (left) with his uncle Tui Sawau Ratu Timoci Matanitobua in Dakuibeqa, Beqa. Photo courtesy of Felix Colatanavanua.

Choosing *Play Intro* prompts a five-minute segment accompanied by Bulou Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga’s voice-over outlining the aim of the project and the intent to repatriate the *vilavilatrevo* ceremony to Beqa (Fig. 8.5).⁷⁹³

⁷⁹² Sailasa Cakau Tora and Calvin Rore from the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture composed and arranged the music accompanying the project.

⁷⁹³ See Appendix M for the full transcript in English and Fijian.



Figure 8.5 Bulou Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga with Beqa in the background.
Photo by Felix Colatanavanua.

Choosing *Go to Beqa* opens on an aerial image of Beqa with a superimposed scroll-down list of the six villages and cultural sites of Sawau not found on any regular topographic map of Beqa island (Fig. 8.6).⁷⁹⁴



Figure 8.6 Main menu of *The Sawau Project*.

Clicking on the name of any locale automatically ‘lands’ the viewer at the exact topographic location, calculated during our mapping surveys (Appendix G(v)).⁷⁹⁵ The viewer then sees photographs and film clips and hears narrations associated with each site

⁷⁹⁴ The one employed in the cultural remapping process of the island is the Sheet No. 30, 1982-1985, Lands and Survey Department, Suva (1:50 000). See Appendix G(iii).

⁷⁹⁵ Clicking ‘TRA’ at the bottom links the viewer to the credits.

as follows.

Dakuibeqa (village)

This is the longest section in the project (24min). Dakuibeqa's *matanivanua*, Nemani Nabure, introduces this chiefly village and describes its customary relationship with the other Sawau villages on Beqa. Accompanied by archival photographs, Miriama Naioro, mother of Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga, then emphasizes the positive effects of the *vilavilarevo* performances, now staged at major hotels in Viti Levu (Fig. 8.7).



Figure 8.7 *Bete levu* Marika Tivitivi leads a *vilavilarevo* ceremony in Dakuibeqa in the 1960s. Nd/na, photograph courtesy of Samuela Vakuruivalu.

Narrated by Sailasa Cakau Tora, a film clip then follows a group of *dauvila* from Dakuibeqa on a journey to the Fijian Shangri-La Hotel & Resort on Viti Levu for an evening performance.

Dakuni (village)

Sekonaia “Jeke” Talebula, an elder from Dakuni, explains how the

vilavilarevo ceremony arrived in Dakuni and the vicissitudes of the Sawau tribe in pre-Cession times. Animated images of the *matanivanua* Josefa “Big Joe” Cegucegu holding family heirlooms complete the segment (Figs. 8.8, 8.9).



Figure 8.8 *Matanivanua* Josefa “Big Joe” Cegucegu holding a copy of a photo of a group of firewalkers at the New Zealand Exhibition. Photo by the author.



Figure 8.9 Close up of the commemorative daguerreotype of firewalkers at Hagley Park in Christchurch during the New Zealand International Exhibition (1905-6). Tui Sawau Ratu Peceli Vitaaukitoqa (7th right, standing) and Cegucegu’s grandfather, Nimilote Ratudina (2nd left, standing), are in the photograph. N/a, courtesy of Josefa Cegucegu.

Soliyaga (village)

Timoci Tabanuqa recalls how the gift of the *vilavilairevo* was given to his tribe and the oath made by Tui Namoliwai to Tuiiaqalita, “*Na nomu kawa kece me yacova na rusa ni vuravura era na rawa nio vilaka tiko nai revo* [to all your next generations, until the end of the world will walk on hot stones].” He recounts how *vilavilairevo* is stewarded and practiced on behalf of their Paramount Chief, Tui Sawau (Fig. 8.10).



Figure 8.10 Timoci Tabanuqa (5th right, standing) and a group of firewalkers on their way to India in November 1972. Nd/na, courtesy of Samuela Vakuruivalu.

Archival images from the performance hosted in 2003 in Soliyaga for the Australian High Commissioner Susan Boyd complete the segment.

Rukua (village)

This segment shows archival film images of Prince Charles’ royal visit to Rukua in February 1974 and the *vilavilairevo* ceremony organized in his honor (Fig. 8.11).



Figure 8.11 Prince Charles chats with Peceli Vitukawalu (1st right) during his visit to Rukua with Fiji's Prime Minister Ratu Penaia Ganilau (1st left) in February 1974. Nd/na, courtesy of Peceli Vitukawalu.

This segment is purely visual. As noted in Chapter 1, Peceli Vitukawalu requested his narrative be excluded from the project.⁷⁹⁶

Naceva (village)

Bete Apenisa Kuruiwaca recalls how he received permission to perform the *vilavilavirevo* ceremony in his village from the Tui Sawau and the *bete levu* Semi Raikadra (Fig 12). He tells how the first *vilavilavirevo* ceremony in Naceva was attended by all his uncles of the *naivilaqata* from Dakuibeqa and Professor Rusiate Nayacakalou. After the ceremony, he remembers shaking hands with Semi Raikadra, who told him, “*Au sa solia vei iko nai revo oqo me nomu. Qarauna vakavinaka, maroroya. Nai revo oqo o sa na taura tawamudu tu Ia mo qarauna, lomana vinaka na i revo* [I've given you the *revo* [earth oven for firewalking] to be yours. Remember to preserve it and be cautious. The *revo* will remain with you until the end. Hold it dearly!].”

⁷⁹⁶ Comments in a different voice will be provided in Version 2.0 of the project.



Figure 8.12 *Bete levu* Semi Raikadra (1st left, standing) and a group of Sawau firewalkers just before boarding a plane to New Zealand in 1953. Nd/na, courtesy of Samuela Vakuruivalu.

Naiseuseu (village)

Elder Jokini Ratuyaqoni, who was also in the group that escorted Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh to New Zealand following their visit to Fiji in 1953, recalls the epic trip as well as performances for dignitaries in Beqa (he is 1st left in the middle row in Fig. 8.12 above; see also Fig. 8.13 below).



Figure 8.13 Jokini Ratuyaqoni, an elder from Naiseuseu during a filmed interview. Photo by the author.

Jokini explains that elders in Dakuibeqa gave his clan the permission to practice firewalking in his village:

Sa lai lako mai, sa lai, keitou sa dua na neitou, na yavusa kece sa vakaitavi sa keitou lai qarava na neitou koro mai Naceva, sa ratou vakadonuya na neitou qase mai Dakuibeqa me keitou sa lai qarava tale ga na vila mai Naceva.

Malovo (cultural site)

This clip is dedicated to the memory of Manua Laveta, who passed away a few days before my departure in July 2005 (Fig. 8.14).



Figure 8.14 Manua Laveta with the author during an interview in Dakuibeqa.
Photo by the author.

He describes the upper land of Malovo where he used to have his garden. He explains that Malovo is also the place where firewalking was held in pre-Christian times (Fig. 8.15). According to the myths about the *vilavilairevo*, this is the place where the first *vilavilairevo* ceremony was held after Tuiqalita brought it back to his village (see Chapter

2).



Figure 8.15 The Tui Sawau's wife, *Bulou Asenaca* (1st left) inside the *revo* at Malovo. Photo by the author.

Nacurumoce (cultural site)

Manua Laveta narrates how a chief arrived at Nacurumoce (lit. 'put the sail down and go to sleep') from the sea and was promptly installed as the Tui Sawau. After his installation, the tribe traveled inland looking for a place to live. Laveta explains that after settling at Navakaisese, they moved downhill until they reached Malovo. This is when Tuiqalita is believed to have received the 'gift' of *vilavilairevo*.

To illustrate this narrative, Felix Colatanavanua cropped the silhouette of an outrigger canoe and animated it so it appeared to move across the waters of Nacurumoce Bay (Fig. 8.16). He also used a close-up of Ratu Finau's canoe that is conserved at the Fiji Museum (Fig. 8.17).



Figure 8.16 A *camakau*, Fijian outrigger canoe. Nd/na, courtesy of the Institute of Fijian Language & Culture.



Figure 8.17 Detail of the *laca ibe* sail. Photo by the author, courtesy of the Fiji Museum.

Navakaisese (cultural site)

Manua Laveta talks about the hill top fortification at Navakaisese. He describes it as an astonishing hilltop with wonderful scenery from which you can see both Kadavu, Viti Levu and even Vatulele. They never built any *bure* there, so the people lived outside.

While gathering images for *The Sawau Project*, it was not possible for us to reach Navakaisese, so we used old photographs juxtaposed with the footage of our previous trips inland (Fig. 8.18). Felix Colatanavanua also obtained a black and white aerial picture of the area from the Lands & Survey Department.



Figure 8.18 Members of the Sawau tribe at a *Vilavilairevo*.
Source: Rod Ewins' private collection.⁷⁹⁷

Naitukutuku (cultural site)

Manua Laveta explains that although Naitukutuku is an uphill trek, it is frequented by the people of Dakuibeqa (Fig. 8.19).

⁷⁹⁷ The photograph is a Tuck's Post Card, published by Raphael Tuck & Sons Ltd. It is undated, but was probably taken around 1920. On the reverse is the caption: "The family of firewalkers prepared for the ceremony - only one family on one island possesses the mysterious secret of walking bare-footed on red hot stones." From Rod Ewins' website, at <http://www.justpacific.com/fiji/fijiphotos/cards/fijians/ceremonies.html>.



Figure 8.19 Waisea and Josefa emerge from the Naitukutuku *revo* (photo by the author).

Naitukutuku means ‘the great message’; it is a term commonly used by women from the Raviravi tribe. For instance, Manua Laveta continues, some might say:

Me dua e vakawati yani ki Dakuibeqa, era dau tukuna e vakacava o Naitukutuku. Sa yali, kevaka sa yali o Naitukutuku sa na rawa nira vakawati yani kina baleta na vanua oya era dau lako mai kina, era sa raica na marama ni Raviravi baleta na irevo ni dalo e tiko e cake, era dau gade mai kina era dau siro mai kina era dau kaya, ‘u, Dakui Beqa sa ji tukutuku

Someone should get married to someone in Dakuibeqa’ and others will reply, “you should go through Naitukutuku”. Women from Raviravi say that they might get married to someone in Dakuibeqa if they take the Naitukutuku trail, there is a large taro earth oven right up there [Fig. 8.19]. Upon walking through, they would say “*uh, Dakuibeqa sa ji itukutuku*”: the name Naitukutuku means ‘the great message’.

Namoliwai (cultural site)

At ten minutes, this is the second longest segment of the project. It is dedicated to

the memory of all the *bete* of the *vilavilairevo* who have passed away. It is enriched by the music written by Sailasa Cakau Tora and by the narration of the myth of the *vilavilairevo* by Apenisa Kuruiwaca. Edited footage shows our trip on January 25, 2005 to the upper Namoliwai river region, thought to be the source of the power to walk on hot stones. We were guided there by Samuela Vakuruivalu, who had not been there in over thirty years. After searching for hours, Samuela recognized the pond he used to visit with his father (Marika Tivitivi), which today has run dry. It was there that, according to myth, Tuiqalita found Tui Namoliwai (Fig. 8.20).



Figure 8.20 Viliame ‘Willy’ (right) and Laisiasa point to the place where the myth says Tuiqalita found Tui Namoliwai. Photo by the author.

The segment is completed by the current ninety-year-old *bete levu* Sevanaia Waqasaqa, who recalls his first *vilavilairevo* performance when he was still in primary school (Figs. 8.21, 8.22).



Figure 8.21 *Bete levu* Sevanaia Waqasaqa in the 1960s. Courtesy of Samuela Vakuruivalu.



Figure 8.22 *Bete levu* Sevanaia Waqasaqa in 1998 at the royal visit of Prince Andrew to Dakuibeqa. Courtesy of Miriama Naioro.

Vagadra (cultural site)

Sekonaia ‘Jeke’ Talebula from Dakuni village narrates how the hilltop fortification of Vagadra was used by villagers to protect themselves from attacks. Below the fortification is Korowa, a site of a large *lovo* for firewalking at the beginning of the last century (Fig. 8.23). Jeke explains that from this plateau can still be seen a huge ditch Tongans dug to prevent flooding of the Korowa valley area.



Figure 8.23 *Vilavilavirevo* ceremony at Korowa with Vagadra in the background. Source: Rod Ewins’ private collection.⁷⁹⁸

Several historic sites (i.e., Namaca, Nabau, Nailomo) were deliberately not included in Version 1.0 of the DVD for lack of images, although audio memories had already been collected. Images of other sites (i.e., Navakaisese, Naitukutuku, Rukua)

⁷⁹⁸ Tuck’s Post Card. Publisher Raphael Tuck & Sons Ltd., no date, but probably around 1920 (Rod Ewins: <http://www.justpacific.com/fiji/fijiphotos/cards/fijians/ceremonies.html>).

need to be corrected and enriched. Several are yet to be re-discovered in the memories and *talanoa* (tales) of the Sawau people and re-mapped. Indigenous knowledge and culture is scattered in the minds of many members of a community, but rarely collected in the form of a map, hence they are quite difficult to envision. *The Sawau Project* aims to be an ever unfolding, open-ended project, however (Tuhiwai-Smith 2005).⁷⁹⁹ It encourages further research and offers the opportunity for the entire Sawau community to participate by adding more photographs and information about their heritage. Thus, it does not freeze culture in a historic moment, as in a fixed medium such as a book or a film. ‘Cultural mapping’ becomes not just a way for displaying spatial human cognition, but a fundamental tool for communicating awareness on managing indigenous resources and the protection of both tangible and intangible indigenous cultural heritage.

The major concern is that database protection, under copyright law, does not protect the contents of the database.⁸⁰⁰ Therefore, the protection in question would not apply to the expressions of culture in the database, but only to their publication or presentation in the form of a collection, anthology or compilation. Moreover, there is a concern that collection or record is made available in digitized form, makes the expressions of culture more accessible and available and may undermine the efforts of communities to protect them. There would be nothing, therefore, to prevent a non-indigenous person from extracting a traditional song, dance, performance and reproducing, adapting and commercializing it.

⁷⁹⁹ “Dialogue on Pacific Experiences & Perspectives on the Use and Ownership of Genes,” Call of The Earth/Llamado de la Tierra, 6-8 June 2005, Suva.

⁸⁰⁰ Some examples of recordings of indigenous cultural expressions whose content is unprotected are: *Folk Performances of Thailand*, published by the Office of the National Culture Commission of Thailand; the *Cultural Stories* developed by the Tulalip Tribes; and *La Banque de Données Ethnographiques du Laos*, which contains 6,000 digitized photographs of traditional dress, musical instruments, handicrafts, and textiles.

The Sawau Project suggests that *sui generis, in situ*, rhizomatic protection of intellectual property could be developed for cultural databases.⁸⁰¹ For example, Fiji's prospective Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill would enable communities to seek copyright for collections of digital storytelling. It had been noticed that despite the tremendous interest in documenting cultural expressions and saving them in databases, indigenous communities are rarely the ones responsible for compiling or holding the databases (Dutfield 2004). In order for the relevant indigenous peoples and traditional communities to establish rights over their traditional cultural expressions and hold the rights to documentation or recording, they should be regarded as their creators or makers or have taken assignment of the rights.

Both Rupeni Nawaqakuta, the lawyer and First Parliamentary Counsel in charge of revising the Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill, and Sipiriano Nemani, National Inventory Project Administrative Officer, argue that, "In Fiji's database, the people are still the traditional owners, and are still the creators and makers. The Institute [Institute of Fijian Language & Culture] is acting only as a facilitator" (Nemani, pers. comm.)⁸⁰². Moreover, once the Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill becomes law, collections and databases of traditional cultural expressions will receive *sui generis* protection not only over how traditional cultural expressions are expressed, but also over the content and ideas represented by those expressions (Nawaqakuta, pers. comm.)⁸⁰³.

Another concern is that documentation and recordation, in particular if it is made

⁸⁰¹ See the Statement of Purpose in Appendix L.

⁸⁰² Interview May 10 2005 h. 10:30, Suva.

⁸⁰³ Ibid.

available in digitized form, makes the traditional cultural expressions more accessible and available and may undermine the efforts of communities to protect them. In the case of the Warumungu's database project, developed by Kimberly Christen and the Australia's Nothen Territory Warrumungu women⁸⁰⁴, it is designed with a layered access to information, a mechanism of protection to the use of indigenous databases' contents echoing Nuno Pires de Carvalho's⁸⁰⁵ old idea (Pires de Carvalho 1999; cf. Dutfield 2004). The Warumungu's database is alternatively 'open', 'partially closed' or 'closed', for specific areas of cultural knowledge based on whose family you belong to, your nationality, and what ritual-levels you have achieved.

The audio-visual documents of *The Sawau Project* remain in Fijian language and are open only to the members of the Sawau community and researchers who have obtained joint permission from the Naivilaqata priestly clan *turaga-ni-mataqali* (head of the clan) and the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture), or the Fiji Museum (all under the umbrella of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage).

One of the twenty copies that were made in October 2006 was deposited with the Institute of Fijian Language and Culture as part of documentation for their National Inventory on Traditional Fijian Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Project. This inventory was started in May 2005, "to effectively police the Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill, at whose root is the preservation and maintenance of

⁸⁰⁴ The database was assisted by grants from the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, the University of California Pacific Rim Research Program and the Digital Cultural Institutions Project of the Social Science Research Council, with funds provided by the Rockefeller Foundation.

⁸⁰⁵ WIPO's Acting Director and Advisor Industrial Property Legislation for Development, who suggested the creation of traditional knowledge databases, which could be protected under special database right.

traditional knowledge and expressions of culture, with its requirements of consent from the traditional owners of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture for non-customary purposes... The viewing of Fiji's database is restricted to senior officers of the office [Institute of Fijian Language & Culture]. However, for general public viewing and usage of information, custodians have to be informed and their consent sought. Information will only be available to custodians of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture, their tribe, clan, family members, upon the initial approval of informants [traditional owners]" (Nemani, personal comm.).⁸⁰⁶

The Sawau Project could have been made broadly available on the Internet, but Sawau members felt they would not be able to control how other people might appropriate their images, resulting in negative consequences for the community (see Pink 2001). Any commercialization of these images is also prohibited at least until Fiji's Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill becomes an enforceable law.⁸⁰⁷ Both *The Sawau Project* and Fiji's *Na ituvatuva* (national inventory) negotiate the issue of confidentiality in the cultural mapping process and the resulting database by not making the database accessible on-line to people outside Fiji's indigenous community.

Implications of *The Sawau Project*

Folklore and performance studies scholars argue that measures intended to preserve, conserve, safeguard, or sustain particular cultural practices are caught between

⁸⁰⁶ According to Parts 1(2) and 2(2) of the fifth draft of Fiji's Pacific Model Law (2006), 'traditional owners' are the *mataqali* or any individual member of a *mataqali* recognised by the *mataqali* as someone in whom the custody or protection of traditional knowledge or expressions of culture has been entrusted in accordance with the customary law and practices of that *mataqali*. Interview Nov. 15 2004 h. 10:30, Suva.

⁸⁰⁷ Maintaining control over the footage means that someday Sawau members may be able to submit *The Sawau Project* as evidence in a court of law. Something similar has already occurred in Vanuatu (discussed in Chapter 7).

objectifying and isolating the non-Western and freezing practices that are inherently mutable (Brown 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 2004, 1998; Taylor 2003). Kimberly Christen, who recently launched a locally-produced DVD in conjunction with the Warumungu project, writes that “colonial salvage projects and the destruction and erasure of cultural materials and practices they provoked haunt contemporary archiving practices and products” (Christen 2005: 318). Christen tangibly demonstrates that not all haunting inspires fear, however, through her work on the Warumungu project. It and similar projects developed by the Xavante and native peoples of Alaska grew out of identity politics and indigenous economic practices as people reached selectively into their pasts to open paths to an undetermined future (Christen 2005: 318; Clifford 2004: 23; Graham 2005: 625).⁸⁰⁸

Over the last two decades, indigenous uses of new technologies have been part of the emergence of a global politics of indigeneity, a boom in cultural tourism, and increased debates over what constitutes and who owns intellectual property and cultural knowledge (Christen 2005; Gregory 2006). Formerly, indigenous peoples relied on oral transmission to communicate and conserve their ideals, morals and stories. Indigenous media producer, Jeremy Torrie, argues that “kept among blood relations, such a mechanism for maintaining traditional knowledge is ingenious, portable, and indestructible, unless the community that holds the knowledge is wiped out” (Torrie 2005: 16). However, Clifford (2004) observes that performing and publishing traditional knowledge is a powerful political act; it enables indigenous peoples who are becoming

⁸⁰⁸ The collaboration between Núcleo de Cultura Indígena and the Instituto das Tradições Indígenas and the Xavante of Eténhiritipá Pimentel Barbosa resulted in the CD *Etenhiritipá: Cantos da Tradição Xavante*. The collaboration between the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage with the Smithsonian’s Arctic Studies Center gave birth to *Looking Both Ways*, a pedagogical video and web site.

marginalized or disappearing physically or ideologically to say to others, “We exist. We have deep roots here.”

Heritage has been criticized as a form of depoliticized, commodified nostalgia—ersatz tradition...Heritage is not a substitute for land claims, struggles over subsistence rights, development, educational, and health projects, defense of sacred sites, and repatriation of human remains or stolen artifacts, but it is closely connected to all these struggles...Heritage projects participate in a range of public spheres, acting within and between Native communities as sites of mobilization and pride, sources of intergenerational inspiration and education, ways to reconnect with the past. (Clifford 2004: 8-9).

Moreover, Clifford argues that:

A symptomatic critique of heritage work may see it as occupying a comfortable niche in postmodern ‘multicultural’ hegemonies: every identity gets its exhibition, web site, coffee-table book, or film. I have argued that this view, while partly correct, misses a great deal of indigenous cultural process and politics. The old/new articulations, performances, and translations of identity are not enough to bring about structural socioeconomic change. But they reflect and to a real extent create new conditions for indigenous solidarity, activism, and participation in diverse public spheres. When they are understood as part of a wider politics of self-determination, heritage projects are open-ended in their significance. (Clifford 2004: 22-23)

I believe that these projects are much more than coffee-table books “even if they end up on coffee tables” (Clifford *ibid.*). They allow control over the creative process and distribution (unlike feature films about indigenous peoples). I also believe that documentation should be evaluated case by case, for every social domain is different. I do not contest that the possession of heritage is a “mark of modernity” as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004: 61) points out, but I argue that in the case of the Sawau, *The Sawau Project* is primarily a mark of identity and recognition.

Recent theoretical debates on the ontology of performance argue that performance cannot be saved, recorded, or otherwise documented because it then becomes something

other than performance. If the “performance’s being... becomes itself through disappearance,” as Peggy Phelan (1993 quoted in Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 60) argues, then disappearance is the *sine qua non* of its existence. In other words, these scholars argue that the performance’s only life is in the present. However, this way it gets denied the diachronic, dialogic aspect intrinsic to any traditional performance (e.g., firewalking in Fiji and Oceania). Hence, time and change which are central to the metacultural nature of culture cannot be accounted and studied.

Discussions on existential philosophy are evidently beyond Fiji’s *Na Ituvatuva*. Nevertheless, this inventory seems aimed to make possible to follow the changes in form and function of the intangible heritage concerned, constitute a form of efficacious ‘defensive publishing’, and ultimately a support to the *sui generis* intellectual property legislation. Both the Fiji’s *Na Ituvatuva* and the Pacific Model Law, reinforce the idea that forms of safeguarding be integrated with legal, educational and economic development efforts so that culture retains its vitality and dynamism (Kurin 2003b, 2004) on one hand, and its ‘oneness’ on the other (Urban 2001).

Strathern & Hirsch (2004) argue that safeguarding heritage, protecting expressions of culture and giving status to traditional knowledge are ideas that do not circulate in a vacuum. The debate over protecting traditional knowledge has an impact on a wide variety of policy areas: cultural patrimony, biological productivity, environmental sustainability, business ethics, global tourism, global competition, international trade, sustainable development, wealth distribution and human rights (Yu 2003).⁸⁰⁹ The conjunction of culture, property, traditional and moral rights and the

⁸⁰⁹ *Symposium on Traditional Knowledge, Intellectual Property and Indigenous Culture,*

indigeneity of many societies seeking international protection has helped create a global civil movement aimed at gaining international recognition of the right to subsistence resources and cultural heritage as a basic human right (Coombe 2001; Strathern & Hirsch 2004). Safeguarding heritage policies not only reinforces the idea that cultural diversity is a human right, but reveals that concerns with self-development and self-determination, and the promotion of dialogue and dialogic conditions must be central to issues of cultural representation (Coombe 1998, 2001, 2005; Kurin 2003, 2004).

The Ethnographer as a Circumstantial Activist!?

As I reflect back on my ethnographic work in Fiji, I realize that my role shifted from anthropologist to volunteer, consultant and ‘activist’. My position changed from academic to advocate. The role of advocacy in anthropology has generated several misconceptions and controversies over the last few years (Ervin 2000; Fluehr-Lobban 2006, 2003b; Hastrup & Elsass 1990; Posey 1998; Ramos 2004; Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006; Singer 1990; Van Esterik 1985). However, there are a number of ways to do advocacy. Van Esterik (1985) distinguishes ‘advocacy’ from ‘Advocacy’ in that small ‘a’ advocacy does not demand the anthropologist take an active role in interceding or speaking on behalf of a community, becoming a mediator, facilitator, or lobbyist. Advocacy may also be envisioned as occurring on a continuum (Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006; cf. Hastrup & Elsass 1990; Singer 1990). The distribution of advocacies along a continuum presupposes different beneficiaries maintaining an equally anthropological intent. Advocacy may serve broad disciplinary goals or general human understanding; it may

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University, 2003.

promote dialogue among diverse social groups or the rights and needs of specific groups in conflicted situations; it may lead anthropologists to become researchers for and consultants to indigenous peoples and traditional communities (Posey 1998: 242).

Outside the western academia the ethnographer is often presented in an unflattering light, sometimes characterized either as a dupe of clever informants, desperately trying to avoid culture shock or as an ambitious, arrogant social scientist making off with tribal lore, exploiting the hospitality and generosity of native people. Academic writing is judged empty and without feelings, false, biting the hand that had fed it.⁸¹⁰ In my opinion, ‘distancing’, is consequential to reflexivity, critical for the endeavor of studying other cultures (Fernandez 1980: 28, 36; Ohnuki-Tierney 1981: 584; Said, 1979[1978]: 259). It follows that ‘native’ anthropologists face an even more difficult task in creating enough distance between themselves and their own cultures. Grasping the ‘native point of view’ is as difficult for non-native anthropologists as avoiding the superimposition of their own cultural categories and meanings. But it is also difficult for native anthropologists that try to ‘distance’ themselves, both intellectually and emotively, to realize that *returning* to a field is not the same as *going out* to a field (Clifford 1997; Ohnuki-Tierney 1981).

From my experience working with the team of insider researchers on the *Na Ituvatuva*, I learned that the insider researcher has to be just as ethical and respectful, reflexive and critical as the outsider researcher. The insider may receive even less pardon for any *faux pas* than the outsider. Indigenous research is a highly political activity that

⁸¹⁰ Vilsoni Hereniko, guest speaker in Tengan, Perry and Ledward’s “Undegraduate Proseminar: Ethnography” (Indigenous Anthropology, Anth. 385c), University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa March 6, 2003 h. 16:30.

can also be viewed as a threatening activity; it may be judged by the indigenous community itself as insufficiently rigorous, reliable, useful, indigenous or friendly (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999). Native anthropologists have the definite advantage in being part of the society from the start, unless they are working in a segment of society radically different from their own (e.g., a researcher from the city doing work in his or her country's rural hinterland).⁸¹¹ Hence, Ohnuki-Tierney suggests that both non-native and native anthropologists could perform complementary roles in studying a culture. All of us, native and non-native, have a stake in making decisions about the control of culture (Brown 2003: 10).

I accept that outsiders, knowledgeable as they are, can never truly know *what it is like* to be a Rotuman or a Beqan. However, I see Hereniko's (2000) point when he acknowledges the fact that if he has been away from Rotuma for a decade, he is also a decade 'out of tune' and that the foreign anthropologist that has just returned from the field is likely to have a more accurate picture than him. Sometimes, he observes alluding to Alan Howard, a non-native researcher who has been conducting research for over thirty years in Rotuma may be in a better position to answer some questions than a native Rotuman, such as himself, who lives outside Rotuma (Hereniko 2000).

Field (2003) explores how different non-native scholars and native intellectuals

⁸¹¹ Kirin Narayan eschews the fixed binaries of native-foreigner, insider-outsider, colonizer-colonized for the idea that we might more profitably view each anthropologist in terms of shifting identifications. In other words she asks all ethnographers to embrace both the 'native' and the 'foreigner' inside them. Narayan asks if native anthropologists are perceived as insiders regardless of their complex backgrounds. In other words she asks if a person from an impoverished American minority background who, despite all prejudices manages to get an education and study his/her own community, should be equated to a member of a Third World elite group who, backed by excellent schooling and parental funds, studies anthropology abroad yet returns home for fieldwork among the less privileged (Narayan 1993: 667; see also recently Jackson 2004: 35).

have at times allied, rejecting struggles related to the academic and strategic uses of essentialism (a misused Aristotelian idea that in colonial times suggested that non-white races had limited abilities because of their essential nature) and anti-essentialism (informed by the idea that people are more the products of the social process than their ‘essences’). Situating anthropological knowledge and ethnographic work in this direction can avoid replicating the chimera of anthropologists wielding dangerous deconstructions, and at the same time can reinforce the reflexive approach of contemporary native and non-native research methodologies. Situating anthropological knowledge and ethnographic work in this way may help reinforce the reflexive approach in both contemporary native and non-native research methodologies.

Posey argues that there will be nothing new in applied anthropology if we do not develop new methodologies for holding dialogues with local knowledge custodians (Posey 1998: 242; Sillitoe 1998). Thus, a central point in cultural representation should be a concern with self-development and self-determination issues, promoting dialogic conditions (Coombe 1998: 208). Working on *The Sawau Project* helped me rethink the way questions are asked, issues are defined, and communities view themselves in relation to cultural property and heritage issues. The current, highly visible recognition of intangible cultural property in the academic and applied politico-economic international (UNESCO, WIPO), Pacific regional (PIFS, SPC), and indigenous Fijian (IFLC, DCH) realms should be understood in terms of what Arno calls a shift “arguably a fundamental shift—in world capitalism toward a new importance of intellectual property” (Arno 2005: 57). Furthermore, being able to share my visual and research methodologies at village and nation level in Fiji, and in particular my role in *The Sawau Project*, made me

visualize how anthropology's contribution to the future of indigenous intangible cultural property, like Napier suggests, is 'critical':

First, in demonstrating what sorts of initiatives may actually be feasible; second, in using knowledge of what is feasible to become a good advocate for indigenous peoples who have less access to all of those pompous international conventions; and third, in showing how advocacy must be situated in a dynamic notion of culture which allows for indigenous groups to be as much or as little like us as they themselves wish to be, and in which we wish more for them that they be what we are not. (Napier 2002: 310)

Epilogue

The Sawau Project arguably touches upon several crucial issues, namely identity, ownership and repatriation of cultural heritage against misuse, misrepresentation, distortion and misappropriation of Sawau cultural values. At the end of July 2005, while Felix Colatanavanua was still in the process of completing and 'burning' the project DVD, he handed me a copy he had worked on all night to show to the people of Dakuibeqa. That was the most important and delicate part of the project. He was planning a more official screening at the completion of the project, in the presence of his uncle, the Tui Sawau, people from other villages and also guests from Suva, but he was anxious to hear the people of Dakuibeqa's first comments.

Recalling Trask's (1991) caveat about intrusive white people penetrating spaces they do not belong to, I sat in the back of Taitusi Vakatawase's house, the only house in the village equipped with a DVD player. I hesitantly turned my camcorder on for one last time to document their reactions. Ethnographic filmmakers know very little about how the *subjects* of their projects might respond to the cinematic images constructed from their lives. This ignorance largely results because "few ethnographic subjects have

been given the occasion to see the films which have been made about them, or to offer any form of response” (Hoskins 1993: 81). Over the course of the two months spent editing *The Sawau Project* at the Institute of Fijian Language and Culture, Felix and I had invited Sawau members traveling in Suva to stop by and comment on the footage, so I should not have been concerned. Even though it was not *my* film, but *their* project, I admit being quite nervous as the first images appeared on the TV screen placed in the center of the room.

More people, young and old, came to Taitusi’s house that afternoon; we had to play the DVD more than a couple of times. I realized that most of the children had never had a chance to see a *Vilavilavevo* ceremony before. They had surely heard about it, but watching their fathers, brothers and relatives jumping in the *lovo* was something totally different. The children imitated them, laughing and repeating the *bete*’s orders: “*kau*”, “*balabala*” (see Chapter 2). The Sawau women, watching their men and relatives wearing only the traditional *kiekie* skirts and a *salusalu* garlands around their necks and displaying their masculine bravura across the hot stones, shouted hilarious comments across the room. All the *bete* had a chance to view their fathers, brothers and cousins performing the *Vilavilavevo*, some of them for the first time observing their techniques and ritual movements. They spoke with appreciation the names of the *dauvila* from the other Sawau ‘firewalking’ villages (i.e., Rukua, Soliyaga, Naceva). They expressed sorrow as they heard again the voice of Manua Laveta, who had passed away just that week.

To the Sawau people, these images represented something more than just a legal tool. They brought to life the awareness of the passage of time, the weight of their grandfathers and a new self-consciousness. Participants became spectators of their own

social narratives and aesthetic dramas. Most of them had never been behind the camera 'Navajo style' and had not taken part in the cultural mapping process. However, while viewing the DVD, these social actors became agents as they raised concerns about fundamental ideas and codes of their culture (Geertz 1973).

Despite the fact that myself and two 'westernized' members of the chiefly family had been behind the project and that it was endorsed by the chief himself and sponsored by the Institute of Fijian Language and Culture, the governmental 'voice' of the Great Council of Chiefs, watching the villagers' enthusiastic responses led me to believe that the project was not informed by the hegemonic ruling elite. *The Sawau Project* is not an apotheosis of chiefdom, but a celebration of a traditional customs (i.e., *vilavilavevo*, *qoli kubu*)⁸¹². The project is not part of a social revolution, either, since Fijian villagers are not plagued by any form of 'social oppression'. Instead, the project is a response to external pressures: dominant hegemonic forces and agents of change and distortion such as the Methodist and Pentecostal churches and the tourism industry. Only time will provide a conclusive answer regarding the impact of *The Sawau Project*, since it was designed to be continued.

This project obviously dribbles the well-recognized reference points in visual anthropology. It is not an ethnographic film and it is not, yet, a truly indigenous media. I wondered if my presence had distorted the data collected? If the Sawau people would have been behind the camera from the beginning instead of only involved in the editing phase, would all of the results of the project have been the same? However, as I have

⁸¹² A visual document of Dakuibeqa's fish drive (*qoli kubu*) performed under the directions of the master fisherman (*Daulevu*) on special occasions, is in the 'Introduction' segment of *The Sawau Project*.

previously argued this is an open-ended project, not a fixed medium. I like to believe that when my name no longer appears in the credits as the 'Director', the project will be fully realized, and I will have moved to the end of the advocacy continuum.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

In July 2002, when I enthusiastically decided to engage in this ethnographic project, I could not rationally explain my choice. Only as I have transcribed interviews, deciphered fieldnotes, and written this dissertation I have realized that I embarked on this study because the Sawau people offered me the opportunity to go *beyond* recording their behavior. At a critical juncture in which their cultural heritage has been misrepresented, misused and epistemologically attacked, they nevertheless permitted me to participate in a collaborative, reciprocal production and mapping of knowledge. They accepted my guidance across the transnational layers and directions imposed by a rapidly changing spiritual and social global environment.

The coup d'état of December 5, 2006 is showing that the rule of governmental law along with customary law and the centrality of chiefly authority are at stake in Fiji. The coup was not simply a single event in which different factions compete for political or economic power. Rather, it was part of an ongoing transformative process rooted in contested views of the past that are forcing local actors to compromise and renegotiate their conceptions of their tradition, identity and heritage in light of new democratic and constitutional requirements. This places a greater burden on chiefs and on the *vanua* than ever before.

At the same time, socio-cultural anthropology is also going through some upheaval and ethical redirection. The core of the discipline—fieldwork and ethnography—has come under new moral scrutiny. Some anthropologists have argued that

anthropology as a field faces the possibility of “extinction” or “hanging on as living dead” unless it can be redirected “into prominent position in society” (Peacock 1997: 9). Collaborative research is suggested as a critical component for the future survival of the discipline. Inevitably, anthropologists who write about tradition, heritage and identity are forced to enter the political arena because they cannot comment on these issues without simultaneously adding their voices to them (Turner 1997: 346).

This study aims to communicate beyond anthropology and academic convention. It shows that collaborative, dialogic research between anthropologists and unacknowledged, under-researched or misrepresented indigenous peoples may lead to presenting research materials in unconventional ways. Often anthropologists profess research interests that are not priorities for the people they study (Tuhiwai-Smith 2007; Riles 2006; Pink 2004; Lassiter 2005a, 2005b; Field 1999). In this study, however, the interests of Sawau people and Fijian policy makers were involved as they sought to design an IP-based *sui generis* system to ensure protection of indigenous communities’ traditional knowledge and expressions of culture (TKEC). This dissertation was ultimately written with and for the Sawau people and indirectly for the people at the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (Institute of Fijian Language and Culture) who expressed interest and provided support for the anthropological and legal study of Sawau’s cultural tradition, heritage and identity. All the interviews, *italanoa* (traditional stories) and excerpts of historical documents incorporated in this study have been transcribed and translated to both Fijian and English. As previously stated, a copy of all the publications and taped interviews collected in the course of this study have been donated to the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti*, which will conserve these materials on

behalf of the traditional custodians.⁸¹³

With the assistance of the Naivilaqata priestly clan members of the *yavusa* Sawau, we reconstructed the genealogical chart for the ‘custodians’ of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony. The chart lists 275 individuals, going back eight generations. It amends some of the bureaucratic errors present in the *Vola ni Kawa Bula* (official register of native landowners) and re-establishes analogical relations between past and present events (Appendix C). Bulou Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga filled in some gaps in Sawau’s historical past by making available some of her grandfather’s (Ratu Timoci Matanitobua) unpublished personal notes from 1926. These offered to the Sawau people an unprecedented syntagmatic view of their prehistory, as it described a sequence of eighteen generations starting ca. 1500 (Appendix H). The data collected indicates that genealogical and historical or mythical narratives are interconnected and mediate the authority of the past.

Both the genealogical chart and *The Sawau Project* resulted from intense collaborative work between the anthropologist, community and policy makers. I previously argued that there will be nothing new in collaborative ethnography if we do not develop new methodologies for holding dialogues with local knowledge custodians and institutions (see Posey 1998: 242). The anthropologist accomplishes this through “ethnographic honesty” (Lassiter 2005: 154). That means both the anthropologist and the informants become each other’s consultants, reading and editing collaboratively and making sure the written product of their collaboration is accessible. This includes any post-fieldwork publications written by the anthropologist. For example, digital copies of

⁸¹³ See letters of acceptance in Appendix B.

chapters from this manuscript have been circulated among members of the Sawau *yavusa* and officials of the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* for comment and lexical corrections.⁸¹⁴

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the main purpose of this study was not to paraphrase ritual movements and techniques of the *vilavilairevo* ceremony and assert the final word on their meaning; rather, it has been to re-assert the ceremony's socioeconomic value and role in Sawau society. I argued that the modern ethnographer should be concerned with matters of 'ethicality' rather than authenticity. In other words, anthropologists should not forget the extent to which various cultural forms and practices encountered in the present are themselves the products of modern social, political and cultural processes (Lindenbaum 2004: 482). Academic dilemmas and empty debates about 'genuine' and 'spurious' traditions become dangerous when evaluated in a vacuum, without consideration for past-present relations and *our* interpretations of them, and without recognizing new forms of rights and properties associated with tradition. Linnekin argues that tradition is a process through which aspects of social life derived from the past are valorized in the present (Linnekin 1991 cited in Turner 1997: 354). The anthropologist's task is not to strip away the inauthentic portions of tradition to expose an authentic core, but to understand the socio-cultural processes by which tradition is constantly renegotiated and acquires authenticity (Turner 1997: 350; Hanson 1989: 898). Stretching Carpenter's famous paradox (1973: 99-100), the anthropologist must recognize that some day indigenous peoples will accept powerful ethnographic texts and films as valid records

⁸¹⁴ According to the most recent Fijian spelling system and grammar based on the research of Paul Geraghty and on the dictionary completed by the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* (endorsed by the Great Council of Chiefs and the Fijian Affairs Board), the final draft of this study complies with the rule that the preposition "i" before the word (e.g., *itokatoka*, *isevusevu* etc.) is attached to the noun.

of their heritage.

Fiji, as several other Pacific Island Nations, is going through a period of simultaneous rejection and revival of tradition. Moral values, interdependency and kinship relations with sacred beings in the unseen world are being questioned. Removing the chiefly system would mutilate Fijians' capacity to trace their lines to ancestral gods (*kalou vu*) and connect with the spiritual world. Aspects of the *vilavilaverevo* ceremony that were overlooked or forgiven by the Methodist church in the past have recently been censured and condemned by the Methodist and 'new' churches as bastions of indigenous heathenism. Other traditional customs have progressively disappeared from school curricula in the name of providing a multi-ethnic education to Fiji's diverse citizenry.

As in several other Pacific Island Nations that have recently escaped or are still under foreign rule, the influence of the outside world presses heavily on Fiji. Traditional cultural expressions are becoming integrated into the global capitalist system, altered to conform to western ways of thinking and acting. Both revival and rejection of traditional cultural expressions and knowledge are critical responses to globalization. Hence, local and global discourses mix and blur.

In the case of the Sawau, kinship bonds and obligations of relatedness are still renewed through food, labor, ceremonial participation, shared earnings, collective ownership and onomastics. Names associated with particular stories and events related to the *vilavilaverevo* are part of an ongoing narration of knowledge (Chapter 3). Naming transforms cult sites into mnemonic landmarks. Naivilaqata's oral narratives associated with the 'gift' of *vilavilaverevo* are indexed to paths and sites on Beqa to become "monuments of island history" (Siikala & Siikala 2005). These narratives inform and

instantiate reciprocal social relations in the Maussian sense of the term.

The *vilavilairevo* ceremony is not staged in the sense of fabricating an impression of authenticity for a tourist audience. The historical-hermeneutic analysis in Chapter 2 shows that Fijian firewalking is not a *de novo* creation, a transformation of theater into ritual, but instead it is a case of transforming ritual into theater through the mediation of firewalking impresarios (Chapter 5). The problem of aesthetics in contemporary anthropology is one of communication rather than ‘tastes’. I argue that aesthetic intuition plays a fundamental role in the performer’s mind. Aesthetic intuition is an active and cognitive process in which cultural factors play a dominant role. In the dialogic process of commodification of their atavistic ceremony, Sawau firewalking performers’ traditionally culture bound aesthetics index an intuition of the social, historical cosmos (*kila ni bula vakayalo*) distancing from mythic reality and toward global modernity (Chapter 5).

Furthermore, the ceremony performed by the Sawau people marks their ethnic culture. Aspects of Sawau social life derived from the past are valorized in the present where the tourist provides a new sort of audience (Lindstrom & White 1994: 14). This demonstrates that ethnic identity is not fixed, but rather is constantly reinvented or reimagined. In other words, notions of culture and change rely on the intuition of new performative possibilities. Culture changes and creative moments are often seen as synonymous (Strathern 1992). Economies like the Sawau’s require a constant investment in making people add their physical and abstract labor (creativity) to add value to their cultural product (see Leach 2004: 154, 162).

Commodification is not perforce the enemy of authenticity and cultural identity.

Sawau performers dialogically negotiate and interpret novel situations in traditional terms, perceiving a continuity of cultural meaning that may escape the tourist-observer. I believe that tourism in this case fosters culture rather than undermining it (Chapter 5). None of the ‘tourism scholars’ who have referred to Fijian firewalking as an example of the detrimental repercussions of tourism has paid attention to the historical processes at work. None of them specify other factors involved in transforming firewalking, including: customary norms regulating the Fijian hierarchy, communal labor and reciprocity, motivations and expectations, diachronic meanings attributed to the experience of firewalking, negotiation and access to new forms of exchange, and hegemonic agents of change. While tourism indeed plays a major role, it is not the only arena in which authenticity is staged and should not be blamed for the malaise of the whole society.

After Brown (2005: 45), I encourage anthropologists—especially those who have been prominent contributors to cultural property debates—to deepen their sharing of the progressive sentiments that motivate legal scholarship on cultural protection rethinking about the uneasiness they often express about law’s received categories. This study maintains that the issue of ownership of cultural property has become a prime moral issue, a *conditio sine qua non* to understand the sociocultural evolution of TKEC. Matters involving indigenous communities, identity, cultural protection, tourism and commodification are all aspects of cultural property discussions. However, whereas discussions of property and commodification may create a sense of cross-cultural similarity to exogenous elements of western ideology, this is misleading and empirically unwarranted (Mosko 2002: 105).

The legal anthropologist should ground legal texts in an ethnography of the surrounding community, including an analysis of people's own changing political, economic, social and cultural terrains across time (Merry 2002). The movement of new legal ideas and practices in an era of global interconnections represents a challenge for the modern ethnographer attempting to follow the agency, architecture and effects of these 'globalized' ideas and practices. I became quite aware of the movement of new legal ideas when instead of trying to represent the Sawau *yavusa* to the hotels or the Fiji Visitors Bureau (already crossing the line between advocacy and practice), I participated in the process of developing a *sui generis* legislation to protect TKEC at the national (Fiji), regional (SPC) and international (UNESCO) levels. I thus acquired a critical understanding of the mechanisms of protection of cultural heritage in everyday life.

'Heritage', in sociopolitical speech, implies new modes of cultural production, an economic enterprise, an object of legislation; in short, it has become essential to commodification (Chapter 5). In Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, I discussed how in certain circles 'cultural heritage' has replaced 'cultural property' as the term of choice and how the 'heritage movement', begun in the early 1970s on the basis of property rights, has recently unfolded in relation to concerns for human rights. The term 'cultural heritage' seems to give local actors a wider choice than 'heritage' alone; it suggests they have a 'right' to decide what to do with their intangible patrimony.⁸¹⁵ Nevertheless, the inherent tension contained in the term 'cultural heritage' indicates the difficulty in resolving two opposing forces: change versus stability (Bauer 2005: 6).

I eventually opted for the term 'cultural property' in the title of this study because

⁸¹⁵ I suggested that 'cultural heritage' be inserted in the subtitle of *The Sawau Project* in 'harmony' with contemporary national, regional and international discourses.

it is more strictly defined in legal terms and open to both practical and philosophical considerations. However, only the symbiotic relationship between ‘cultural heritage’ and ‘cultural property’ makes it possible to juxtapose the ‘belongingness’ of the Naivilaqata clan with their cultural symbols and practices against a more static, legalistic view of culture. The combination of the two notions, cultural heritage and cultural property, is particularly relevant to the reification of identity in the case of intangible, immaterial TKEC ownership. While physical pieces of cultural heritage survive long after the deaths of the people who produce them, intangible heritage is more closely related to its creators, as it often depends on oral transmission. It is the community’s collective responsibility and fiduciary duty to maintain its intangible heritage.

Cultural property is fusing with the notion of “cultural rights” (Cowan et al. 2001 quoted in Strathern & Hirsch 2004: 2), for it enhances ethnic identity, understanding and appreciation of the cultures that produce such property. While western intellectual property rights alienate creators from their creative products as they are exchanged for other commodities, among the Sawau, the ownership of intangibles excludes the possibility of alienation. Albeit exogenous elements such as modernity, westernization, commodification and globalization have affected pre-existing patterns of sociality, ownership and kinship (Mosko 2002), property, in the case of the Sawau *vilavilairevo*, is actually a form of sociality to be interpreted more about ‘custodianship’ than ‘ownership’. The Naivilaqata priestly clan’s ‘custodianship’ operates outside the logic of ‘possessive individualism’ (Harrison 2000: 676). The Naivilaqata clan’s responsibility for its cultural heritage is embedded in a continuing relationship between the people, their *vanua* (land) and other traditional and cultural resources. Thus, it is inconceivable that an

expression of their collective identity could be permanently or completely alienated. The land, like the *vilavilairevo*, is a gift that ultimately belongs to God but has been given to them to be held in trust for future generations. Custodianship is associated with an enduring sense of place and relationship to the village. Hence, the Sawau people share collective responsibility toward their TKEC just as their identity is philosophically vested in communalism and intertwined with their mythological and kin relationships.

In the course of this study, I have tried to make persuasive arguments about the limitations of the current western intellectual property rights laws and suggested strategies for implementing alternative systems of protection given varied ideas of ‘property’ in indigenous cultures. Like western intellectual property that has the ability to transmit knowledge, the unequivocal connection between the *vilavilairevo* ceremony practiced in Beqa and the Raiatean *umu tī* suggests that the Fijians, like other Pacific Islanders had their concept of ‘intellectual property’ for centuries. Several landmark cases discussed in this study (Chapter 6, 7) recognize a pre-existing system of law among indigenous peoples inseparable from the concept of ‘identity’. These cases also suggest that neglected non-western epistemologies may provide us with new concepts and modes of organizing and protecting TKEC.

A few centuries ago, indigenous songs, dances, performances, rituals and ideas did not need any intellectual property protection, for people maintained ‘physical control’ over their identity and heritage. Since a few years ago, however, with the advent of the Internet, misappropriations and omissions regarding TKEC include: unauthorized reproductions; adaptations and subsequent

commercialization of TKEC with no sharing of economic benefits; appropriation of traditional languages, words, stories, symbols and distinctive signs; use of TKEC in a degrading, insulting or culturally and spiritually offensive ways; failure to acknowledge the traditional source of a creation or innovation; unauthorized fixation of live performances of TKEC and subsequent acts in relation to those fixations.

The majority of scholars studying how to protect traditional cultural expressions have concluded that intellectual property law is unsuitable and that new *sui generis* rights should be established and enforced to allow indigenous peoples to maintain and express their identity. Fiji's prospective Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill, derived from the Pacific Model Law analyzed in Chapter 7, is an IP-based *sui generis* system which creates new IP-like rights for cultural heritage. The Bill would protect TKEC against illicit use normally protected by copyright law. The Bill would give exclusive rights to traditional owners and custodians who would then be able to authorize or prevent others from undertaking certain acts in relation to their TKEC. It would also establish a Code of Ethics in relation to use of TKEC. That is, traditional owners and custodians, such as the Sawau, would hold moral rights to their TKEC.

Instead of developing a national legal system from scratch, which would have the disadvantage of lacking bilateral or multilateral agreements providing protection in foreign jurisdictions, Fiji has taken a regional approach in adopting the Pacific Model Law to achieve harmonization across the Pacific and with other national systems. This should enable mutual recognition of rights and a regional

mechanism for the resolution of disputes.

The Pacific Model Law has contributed to the international rights discussion without incurring in a procedural uniformity that threatens the goal of preserving cultural diversity. The Pacific Model Law provides for hybrid national and regional approaches. It sets out a framework for national legislation and leaves matters of implementation to policy-makers in accordance with their national laws and systems. Most importantly, the Pacific Model Law recognizes that the creativity and innovation found in traditional cultures benefits local communities. Traditional communities are the holders and custodians of TKEC and the primary decision-makers regarding their use. It encourages the use of customary laws and traditional governance and decision making systems, recognizing that traditional communities are entitled to rely exclusively upon their customary forms of protection.

In this IP-based *sui generis* system, it is not imperative for traditional communities to be defined as legal persons. National legislation may remain silent with respect to representation requirements, which leaves the matter open to all forms of representation. Some forms of IP protection, such as those determined by geographic location, do not need to define distinct ‘owners’ of cultural property and may be administered by a cultural authority on behalf of a group of beneficiaries. In this sense, western laws may be bent to accommodate customary laws and practices.

The *Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki* (National Inventory on Traditional Fijian Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Project) started in May 2005 to

implement Fiji's Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill, is in the end valuable because it offers *sui generis* protection measures in lieu of western intellectual property law and treats TKEC as communally owned. Archival practices and documentation do not necessarily freeze intangible cultural property, nor make intangible heritage tangible. The natural processes of transmission, re-creation and change are not halted. Documentation is not a totalizing solution to the complex problem of protecting cultural property, however, it can promote active protection of cultural heritage and transmission, encourage cultural and economic development and transversally recognize *itaukei* (indigenous) self-determination.

Laws and policies regarding intangible heritage are not just barely enhanced ownership rights. They are being expanded to include not only cultural masterpieces, but also their creators, assuring that their dignity comes first. Besides identifying traditional cultural expressions, we should identify their traditional owners. Before undertaking any inventory, we must involve traditional owners, building research capacity and consensus on goals. New laws should be communally determined. Whereas western laws represent a system of perpetual creativity where people own for a period of time what they create, customary practices suggest a system of perpetual ownership where people create what they own. In TKEC, creativity functions to perpetuate the transfer of ownership (Strathern 2001, 2005).

This social process needs to be preserved in addition to ensuring continued production of TKEC. However, other social processes interfere with the perpetuation of ownership of TKEC, including globalization, tourism, commodification, and culture is dialogically reproduced through these processes. The current stress on law as a technique

of attribution and identification is significant (see Hirsch 2004: 176). In particular, when western laws become informed by indigenous customary norms. I have already indicated that there is a place for legal pluralism and legal regulation, but not too much should be expected from it. The example of *The Sawau Project* shows that new methodologies and practices can be created specific to the demands for some kind of social intervention *in situ* to preserve traditional forms and symbols that date back to immemorial time.

Irrespective of whether TKEC were recently created or gradually developed long ago, denying their ownership by indigenous and local communities could reinforce the assumption that traditional knowledge is and should remain part of the public domain. One of the issues addressed by *The Sawau Project* is that copyright law does not protect the contents of digital media assemblages of historic and present day audiovisual material. Copyright protection only applies to their publication and presentation in the form of a specific collection, anthology or compilation, but not to the expressions of culture in the database. When the collection is made available in digitized form, the expressions of culture become more accessible, but that undermines the effort of communities to protect them. Copyright law would not prevent a non-indigenous person from extracting a traditional song, dance or performance to adapt, reproduce, or commercialize it. However, a *sui generis* cultural property law could be applied. Under Fiji's prospective Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill collections of digital storytelling and traditional expressions of culture could find a novel form of protection.

Colonialism, multiculturalism, commodification, globalization, novel religious practices, tourism and international economic and political bodies all affect cultural

property and cultural heritage. However, whether culture is innovative and dynamic *per se*, both heritage and property imply something more clearly defined and static. This imbalance evidences why protecting, controlling and possessing cultural heritage and property is so arduous to regulate in law, policy and practice (Bauer 2005: 6). Hence, recognizing the value of TKEC requires new forms of intellectual and legal discourse (Coombe 2005a: 560). Despite tremendous interest in documenting cultural expressions and saving them, indigenous communities are rarely the ones responsible either for compiling or holding such databases. With *The Sawau Project*, the Sawau community have established positive communal right to hold the rights to documentation and recording of their TKEC. One of the twenty-one copies of *The Sawau Project* is deposited with the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti*, representing an *in situ*, rhizomatic strategy for cultural property protection.

Several commentators have argued that inventory policies are reminiscent of 19th century colonial collectors of the exotic and early 20th century preservationist anthropology. On the one hand, measures intended to preserve and safeguard cultural forms run the risk of freezing, objectifying and isolating these practices and denying the mutable, processual dynamism of culture. On the other hand, colonial salvage projects and the destruction and erasure of cultural materials and practices they provoked haunt contemporary archival practices and products (Christen 2005: 318). The Sawau and several other indigenous digital projects discussed in this study demonstrate that not all haunting inspires fear.

Looking at a society from the outside remains a strength in contemporary anthropology. However, the complex postcolonial, postmodern world presents

anthropologists with new opportunities for collaborative practice, which at the beginning of this study I termed ethnographic convergences and intersections. On that boat slowly heading to Beqa Island in November 2004, I was assaulted by thoughts of the potential harm I might cause to the culture and domain I was about to study; looking back on my fieldwork now, I view it as a reciprocal, counter-hegemonic endeavor. Multiple ideas, voices, agendas, and interests produce contemporary ethnography. Rather than get stuck in debates about the ethnicity of the researcher, it is better to suggest strategies to guarantee that research by outsiders becomes a truly reciprocal affair. “It is essential to leave the whole discursive field of analysis open to interventions from every direction...In a multisited debate about a multiform society no voices should be silenced, inside or outside” (Van Meijl 2007: 14). Thus, the *Tabana Ni Vosa kei iTovo Vakaviti* does not assert control over research or create a monopoly on the representation of culture. Instead, it is formulating a research policy and a code of ethics enabling both local and overseas researchers to uphold the customary rights of traditional owners following a model of IP-based *sui generis* protection of Fiji’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage. As Lassiter (2005: 74) recently observes:

The ever-evolving—and indeed, the ever-more-central—negotiation of moral responsibility between and among ethnographers and consultants has, over time, steadily given rise to an engaged ethnographic practice that is more morally and ethically responsible to our collaborators.

APPENDIX A
Alphabetical list of interviews

Ateca, Meresiana

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Bainivualiku Talova, Asenaca

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Barbour, Titila

2006 interview. In *notes*.

Bigay, John

2006 interview. In *notes*.

Bola, Timoci

interview. In *postponed*⁸¹⁶.

Bonato John (Giovanni)

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Bose, Levani

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Buadromo, Sagale

2005 interview. In *letter*.

Bukasoqosoqo, Emosi

2004 interview. In *notes*.

Caqinavanua, Elaitia

2005 interview. In *tape*.

⁸¹⁶ Scheduled interviews that for several reasons have been postponed, thus object of future research.

Caucaunitoba, Manasa

2004 interview. In *notes*.

Cavu, Elaisa "Junior"

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Cegucegu, Josefa "Big Joe"

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Coboiverata Caucau-Filipe, Adi Asenaca

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Cokanasiga, Jokatani

2005 interview. In *notes, tape (phone)*.

Colatanavanua, Ratu Felix Abdelkader

2004

2005

2006

2007 interview. In *notes, email*.

Crosby, Andrew

2002, 2003, 2005 interview. In *email*.

Cummings, Tom

2004 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Cummings, Terooatea "Therese"

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Dabea, Jolame "Joe"

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Damuni, Savenaca

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Danford, Lionel

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Davuke, Ulaiasi

2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Davutu, Salanieta

2004 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Dolokoto, Ledua

2005 interview. In *tape, notes*.

Dunis, Serge

2006 interview. In *notes*.

Falemaka, Mere

2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Forsyth, Miranda

interview. In *postponed*.

Gavidi, Osea

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Geraghty, Paul

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Gosselin, Jim

2005 interview. In *notes, internet press*.

Graffe, Raymond Teriirouterai Arioi

1992

2002 interview. In *tape*,

film, notes.

Hau'ofa, Epeli

2005 interview. In *notes, tape.*

Helu-Thaman, Konai

2005 interview. In *notes, tape.*

Hovelle, Thomas

interview. In *postponed.*

Kamikamica, Savenaca

2005 interview. In *notes.*

Kanehe, Le'a

2005 interview. In *tape.*

Kanemasu Patrick, Yoko

2005 interview. In *notes.*

Katanibau, nn.

interview. In *postponed.*

Kelea, Ema

2005 interview. In *tape.*

Kini, Isikeli

2005 interview. In *notes.*

Kokolagi, Anitiveta

interview. In *postponed.*

Korocawiri Vakuruivalu, Tikiko

interview. In *postponed.*

Koroi, Pita

2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Koyamaibale, Viliame
interview. In *postponed*.

Kuilamu, Marika
2005 interview. In *tape*.

Kuruiwaca, Apenisa
2004 interview. In *tape, notes, film*.

Labalaba, Sakaraia "Siqa"
2005 interview. In *notes*.

Lagilagi, Vilimoni
2002
2005 interview. In *notes*.

Langi, Jione
2005 interview. In *notes (phone)*.

Lasaro, Manasa
2005 interview. In *tape*.

Laveta, Manasa "Manu"
2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Levulevu, Big Paula
2005 interview. In *notes, film*.

Levulevu, Small Paula
2005 interview. In *tape (Mere)*.

Likubuli, Milika

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Lilly

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Livani, Maikeli

interview. In *postponed*.

Maiava, Iosefa

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Manoa, Pio

2004 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Mastellone, Andrea

2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Mataitini, Apenisa "Tulevu"

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Mataitoga, Alipate

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Matanitobua, Ratu Timoci (Tui Sawau)

2004

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Matawalu, Samu

interview. In *postponed*.

Mosko, Mark

2006 interview. In *notes*.

Mua, Rusieli

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Nabure, Nemani

2004 interview. In *tape, film*.

Nagusuca, Nanise

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Naioro, Miriama

interview. In *postponed*.

2004 Interview. In *tape, film*.

Naivalu, Mosese

2004 interview. In *notes, film*.

Naivalu, Marika "Tuks"

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Nalatu, Joape

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Naqata, "Snake"

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Narovini, Semisi

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Naucabalavu, Jone

2004 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Nawaqakuta, Rupeni

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Nemani, Sipriano

2004

2005

2006
2007 interview. In *notes, tape, email*.

Olsson, Gail
2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Pathik, Devendra
2005 interview. In *tape*.

Peters, Kelvin
2006 interview. In *notes*.

Peteru, Clark
2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Pohler, Susanne
2004 interview. In *notes*.

Prince Andrew, Duke of York
1998 interview. In *film*.

Qarase, Laisenia
2004 interview. In *press*.

Qetaki, Alipate
interview. In *postponed*.

Radaveta, Timoci "Jim"
2005 interview. In *notes*.

Rakaibula, Lote
2002
2002, 2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Rambaldi, Giacomo

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Rasigatale, Manoa

2005 interview. In *notes, film*.

Ratu Kini, "Tukini"

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Ratulevu, "Big Esala"

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Ratulevu, Esala

2004 interview. In *tape, notes*.

Ratulolo, Waisake

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Ratunabuabua, Adi Meretui

2004

2005

2006

2007 interview. In *notes, tape, email*.

Ratunaua, Rusiate

2004 interview. In *notes*.

Raturaga, Tupou

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Ratuyaqoni, Jokini

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Ravuvu, Asesela

interview. In *postponed*.

Ravuvu, Amerita

2006 interview. In *notes*.

Regenvanu, Ralph

2006 interview. In *notes, tape, email*.

Reid, Te Tika Mataiapo "Dorice"

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Rigamoto, Marieta

interview. In *postponed*.

Rovonokula, Mark

2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Rumakiek, Rex

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Salato, Macu

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Senibulu, Isireli

interview. In *postponed*.

Senigasau, Mere

2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Sereicococo, Semesa

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Setariki

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Sivinia, Koroi

2004 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Solomon, Maui

2006 interview. In *notes, email, tape*.

Suguturaga, Inoke Seru

2006 interview. In *notes*.

Susu, Merewai

2004 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Tabanuqa, Timoci

2004 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Tabuavou, Aseli

2004 interview. In *tape*.

Tabukarawa, Taniela

2004 interview. In *notes*.

Talebula, Sekonaia "Jeke"

2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Tava, Waisea

2005 interview. In *note*.

Tavailagi, Semi

2002

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Tavaiqia, Tavaita

2006 interview. In *notes*.

Te Pareake-Mead, Aroha

2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Thaman, Randy

interview. In *postponed*.

Thomas, Larry

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Tikina, Jiutasa

2004 interview. In *notes*.

Tivitivi, "Big" Marika

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Tivitivi, Marika

2002

2004

2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Tomlinson, Matt

2005

2006 interview. In *email, notes*.

Tora, Cakau Sailasa

2005 interview. In *notes, film*.

Tourists

2002

2004

2005 interview. In *notes, tape, film*.

Tuamoto, Josefa

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Tubanavau, Mika

2004

2005 interview. In *notes, film*.

Tuberi, Savaira

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Tugaue, Ame

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Tuhiwai-Smith, Linda

2005 interview. In *notes, tape*.

Tuikilakila, Waqairatu

2005 interview.

Tuiloma, Iliesa

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Tuimatanisiga, Ro Mereani (Bulou)

2004

2005

2006

2007 interview. In *notes, film, email*.

Tuipulotu, Rika

2005 interview. In *notes (phone)*.

Turagakele, "Big Josh"

2004 interview. In *notes, film, tape*.

Turanivalu, Wame

2004 interview. In *notes*.

Tuvuki, Niqa

2005 interview. In *notes*.

Tuwere, Ilaitia

interview. In *postponed*.

Vakarawa, Tukai

2005 interview. In *notes (phone)*.

Vakatawase, Taitusi

2005 interview. In *tape, notes*.

Vakatobolea, Neori

interview. In *postponed*.

Vakuruivalu, Samuela

2002

2004

2005 interview. In *tape, notes, film*.

Vatu, Saimoni

interview. In *postponed*.

Vatucicila, Inosi

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Vitukawalu, Inise

2006 interview. In *notes*.

Vitukawalu, Peceli

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Vola, Waisea

2005 interview. In *notes, film*.

Vuetanavanua, Sevenaca

2005 interview. In *tape*.

Vuikaba Kepa, Ro Teimumu
interview. In *postponed*.

Vuli, S.
2005 interview. In *notes*.

Waqā, Watisoni
2004 interview. In *notes*.

Waqairatu, Tuikilakila
2005 interview. In *tape*.

Waqasaqa, Sevanaia
2004
2005 interview. In *tape, film*.

Waqasaqa, Sevanaia "Waqā"
2005 interview. In *notes*.

Waqavakatoga, Taito
2005 interview. In *notes*.

Yabaki, Akuila
2005 interview. In *Internet press*.

APPENDIX B

IFLC and Ministry of Fijian Affairs letters of acceptance of donation⁸¹⁷

⁸¹⁷ The first letter is dated April 27, 2005, the second one, not dated, was received on July 14, 2005.



INSTITUTE OF FIJIAN LANGUAGE & CULTURE.
TABANA NI VOSA KEI NA ITOVO VAKAVITL

41 LOFTUS ST. SUVA. P.O. BOX 2100 GOVT. BLDGS, SUVA.
TEL: 3316955/ 3316956/ 3316957 DIR. (Ext. 201) SAO. (Ext. 206)
FAX: 3308761.

27th April 2005.

Mr. Guido Pigliasco
C/- Department of Anthropology
University of Hawai'i at Manoa.
Honolulu
Hawaii.

Re: Acceptance of collection donation.

Dear Sir,

My apologies for responding late to your initial letter dated 7th April 2005. However, on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer, it is with our greatest pleasure to receive such a collection, which is quite rare, of an opportunity, to come across.

The Institute of Fijian Language and Culture, upon merging with other departments of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, has always been recognized as the prime resource centre on Fijian language and culture for the Bose Levu Vakaturaga (the epitome of Fijian leadership structure and organization in Fiji), Fijians and other interested parties who would like to learn more, develop or enhance their current knowledge of the local lingua franca and customs.

However, as the only centre devoted solely to the study of Fijian anthropology, it needs to have a structured system whereby its archival collection should have a wide spectrum of literature on aspects of Fijian language and culture. But this goal is yet to be achieved since most researchers who visit Fiji to study the local culture return to their respective countries fulfilling their required reasons for initially coming into the country and not assist the research and education of locals about their culture, let alone, depositing their research materials to local resource centres. And secondly, the difficulty in obtaining rare collection of Fijian anthropological literature from overseas libraries, museums, research centres, universities, publication houses, and well-known researchers themselves.

Hence, the Chief Executive Officer is grateful to the initiative you have shown by donating all that you have collected in the past towards the study of one of Fiji's unique heritage, which has transcended internationally creating a lasting image about Fiji, to visitors - "**Vilavilavevo**". I wish to reiterate that what you've done means a lot to the Institute, not only in building its archives with your huge collection but creating a fountain for current and future generations of Fijians in accessing rare resources on an important heritage once difficult to retrieve due to its inaccessibility and availability only overseas.

I would also like to confirm that the Institute would adhere to all the terms and conditions you've highlighted in your initial letter.

Besides, I certainly hope that this will certainly be neither the first nor the last of your relationship and support for the Institute and Ministry as a whole. We look forward to working with you on a continual basis.

A big VINAKA VAKALEVU and all the best in your research.

Please liaise with Sipiriano Nemani to discuss further the processing of your collection.

Yours sincerely,



Misiwaini Qereqeretabua (Mr.)

Director

Institute of Fijian Language and Culture

for Chief Executive Officer, Fijian Affairs, Culture & Heritage, & Provincial Development

cc: Chief Executive Officer, MFACHPD

A/Senior Administrative Officer, IFLC (S. Nemani)



MINISTRY OF FIJIAN AFFAIRS, CULTURE & HERITAGE, PROVINCIAL DEVELOPMENT
1 WHOLLY STREET
P.O. BOX 2000
GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS
SUVA, FIJI
TELEPHONE: 3215400
FAX: 3212 580

Mr. Guido Pigliasco
Doctoral Candidate
Anthropology Department
University of Hawaii
HONOLULU

Donation of transcribing machine and audio-tapes.

Sir,

Again, on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer, Fijian Affairs, Culture & Heritage, Provincial Development, I wish to express the Ministry and the Institute's big VINAKA VAKALEVU to your donation which will greatly assist, as you've mentioned, towards the facilitation Fiji's national inventory and more importantly the safeguarding, revitalising and promotion of Fijian language and culture.

We certainly welcome and accept your donation, and respect reservations mentioned on the audio collection.

I wish you all the best in the arduous task ahead of you, which is the compilation of your thesis and looking forward to receiving a copy of the published version for the Institute.

God Bless.


M. Qereqeretabua (Mr.)


Director

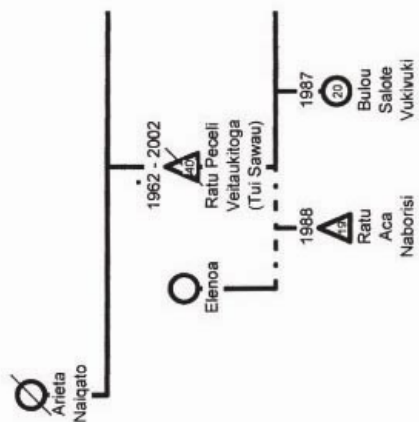
for Chief Executive Officer, Fijian Affairs, Culture & Heritage, Provincial Development.

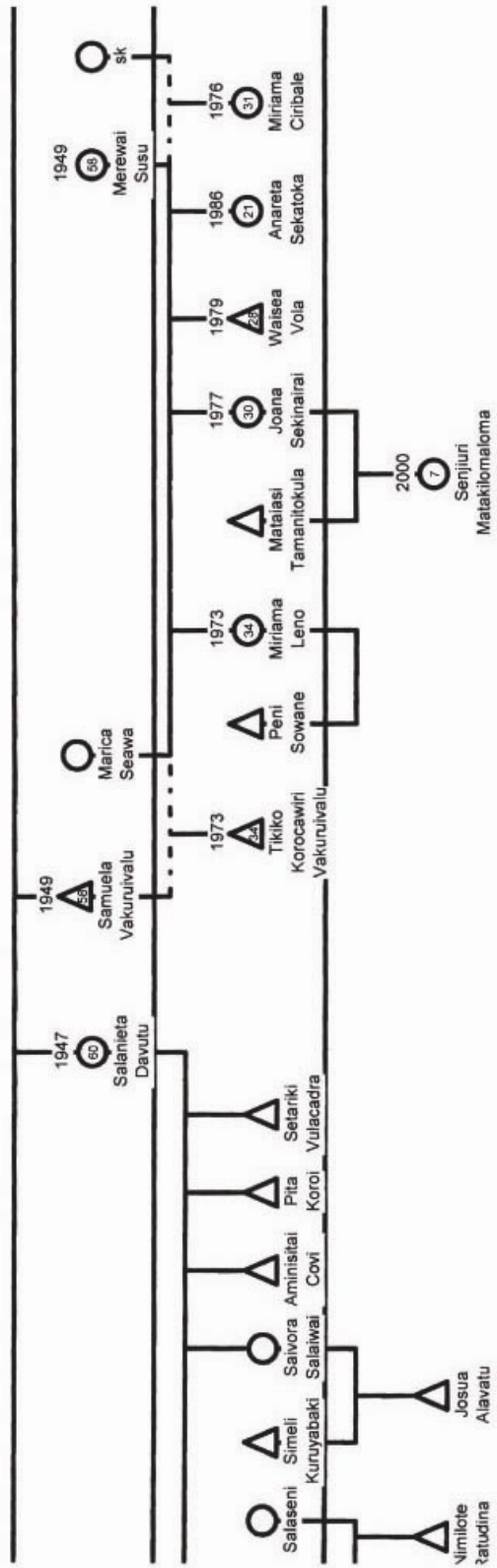
APPENDIX C

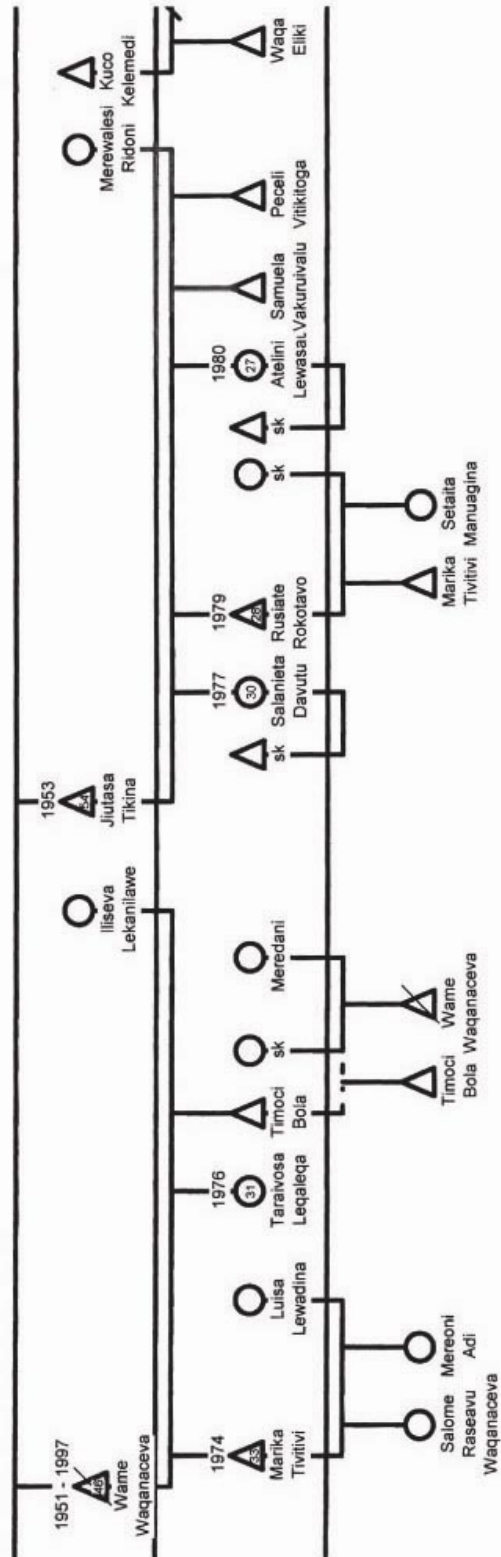
Naivilaqata Genealogical Chart⁸¹⁸

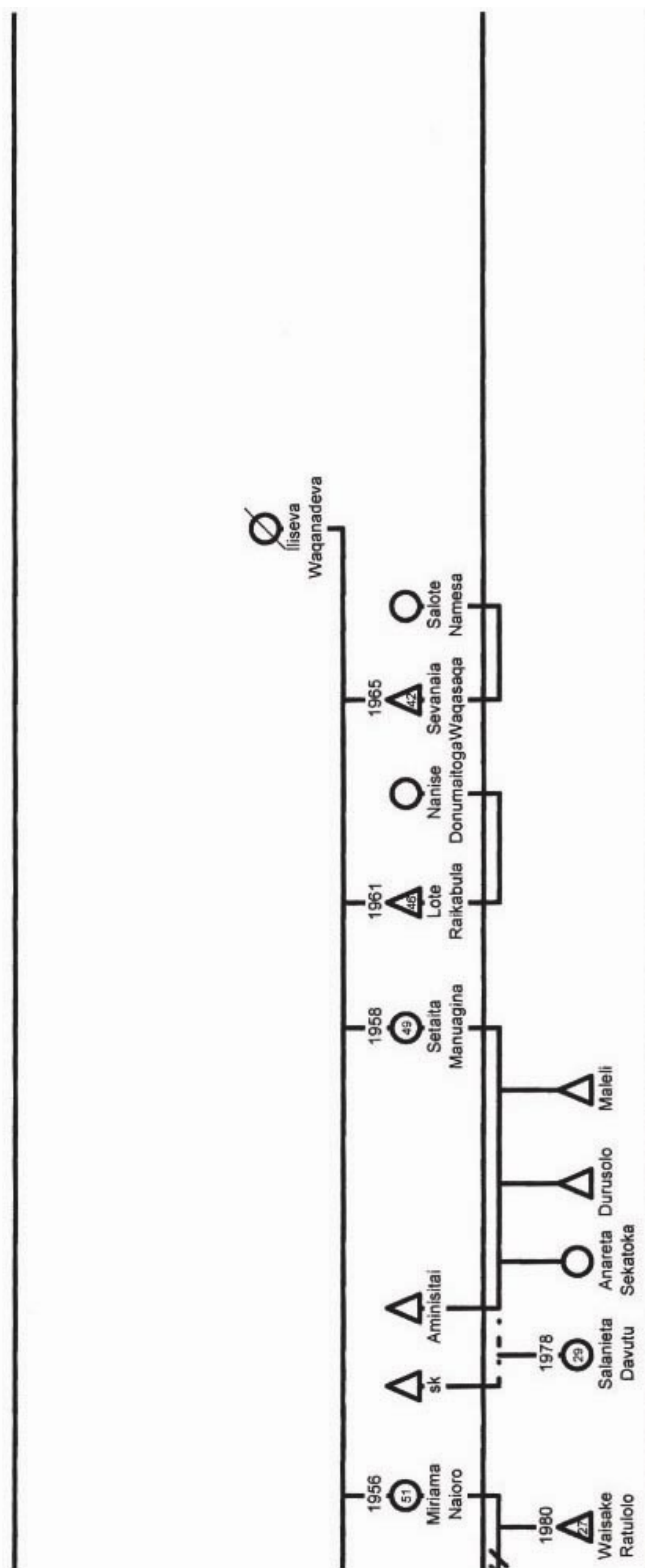
⁸¹⁸ Former *bete levu* (high priests): 

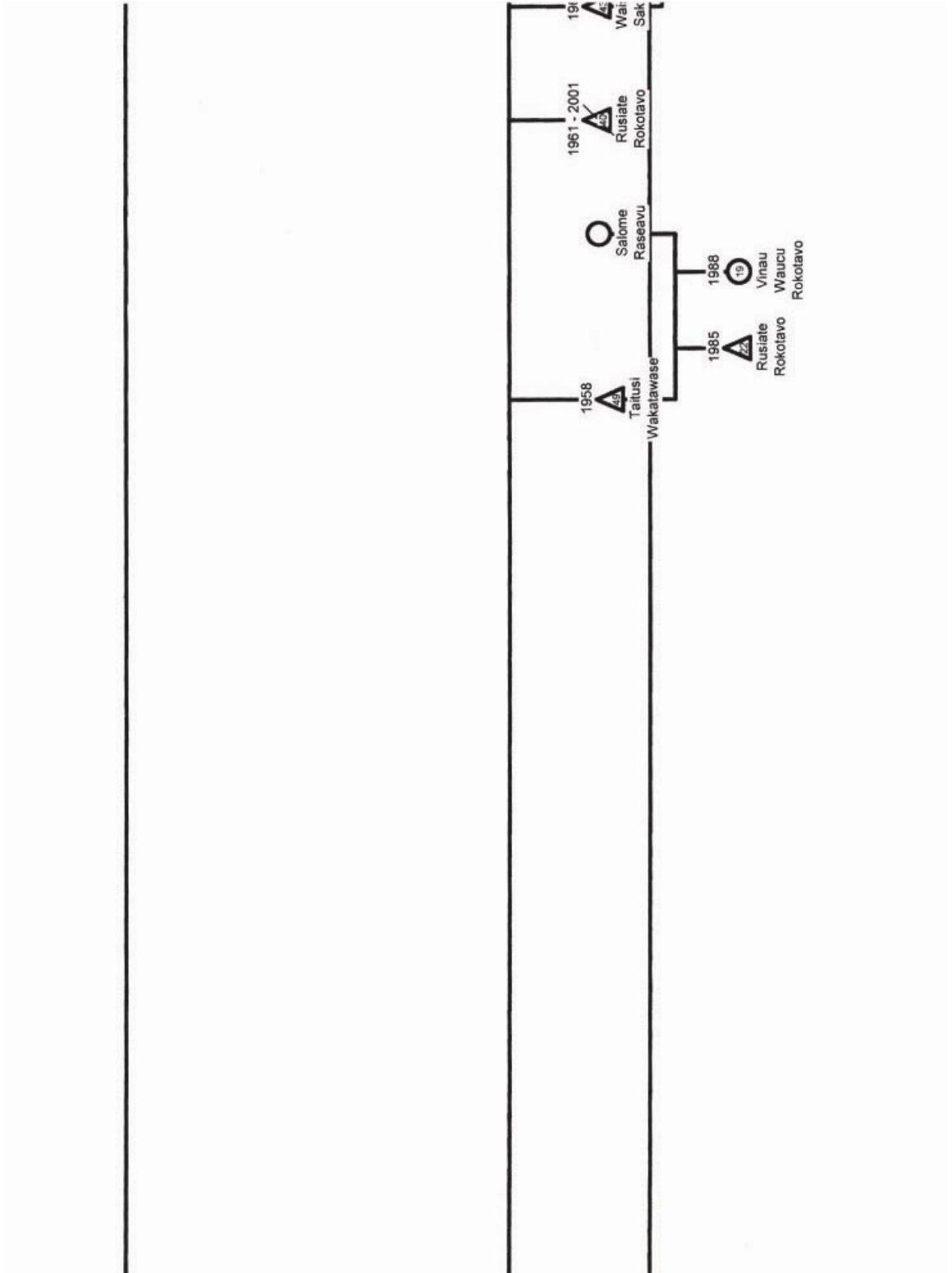
Current *bete levu* (high priest): 
 Temporary relation: - - - - -
 Divorce: —//—











34
sea
eta

Salanieta

1966
Paula
Levulevu
"Small Paula"

Vaseva
Levulevu

1972
Sisiteri
Kauvakatoga

Epeli
Magimagi

1994
Paula
Lavulevu
Rokotavo

2001
Niko Verekoto
Rokotavo
(Pita Koroi)

1998
Camari
Leno
Rokotavo

1998
Sisiteri
Kallivakatoga

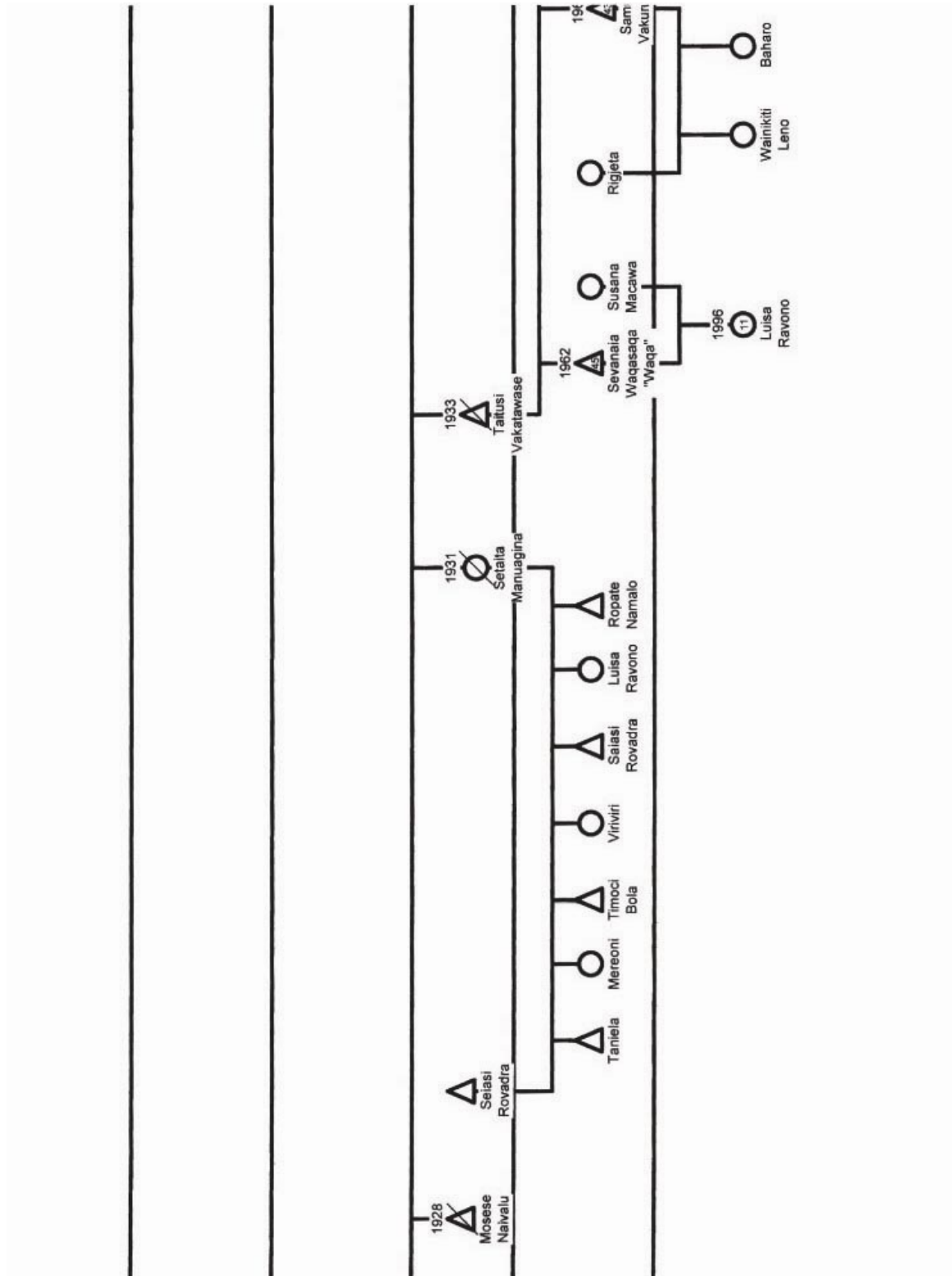
1991
Marca
Recoka

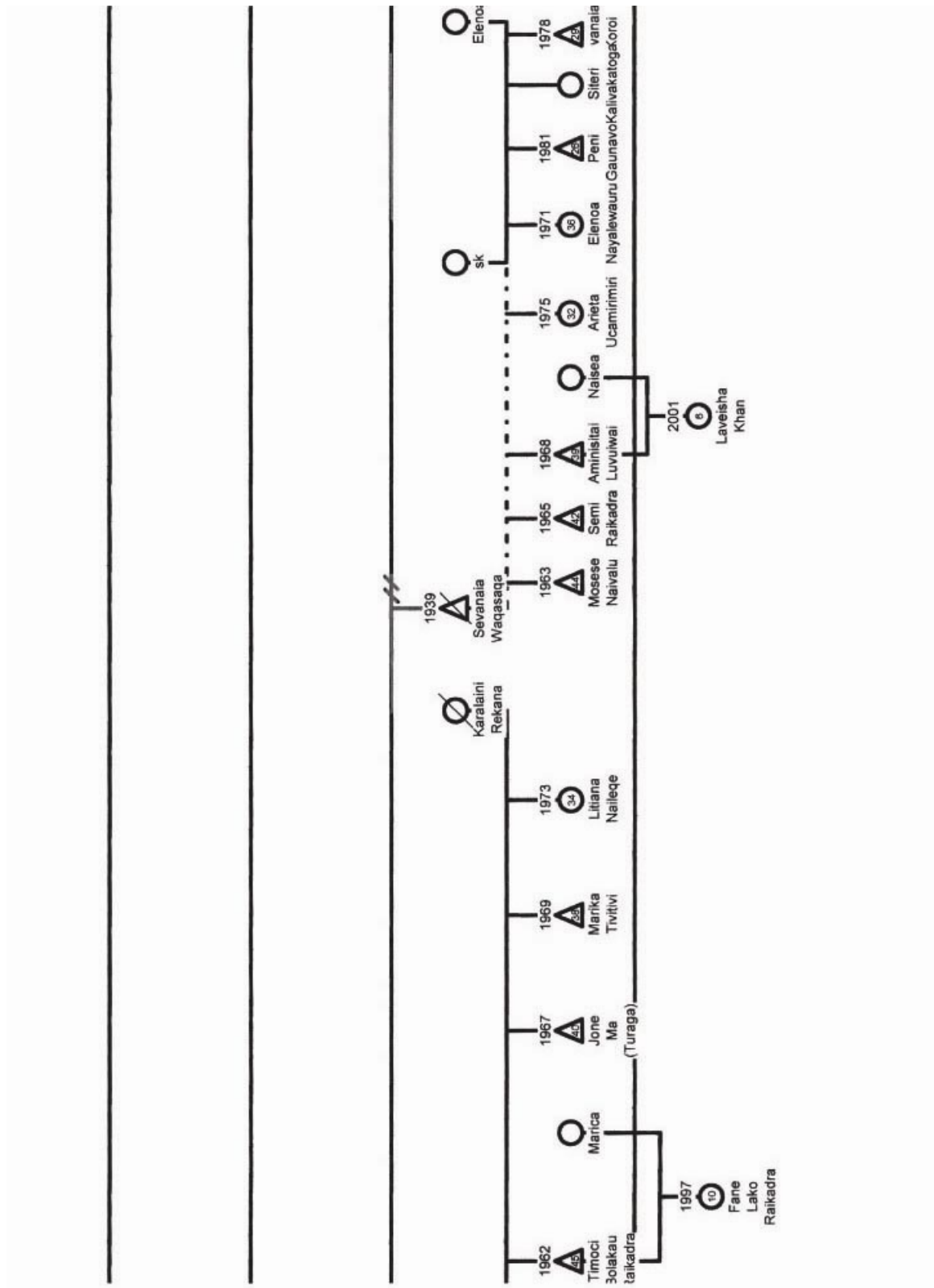
1872

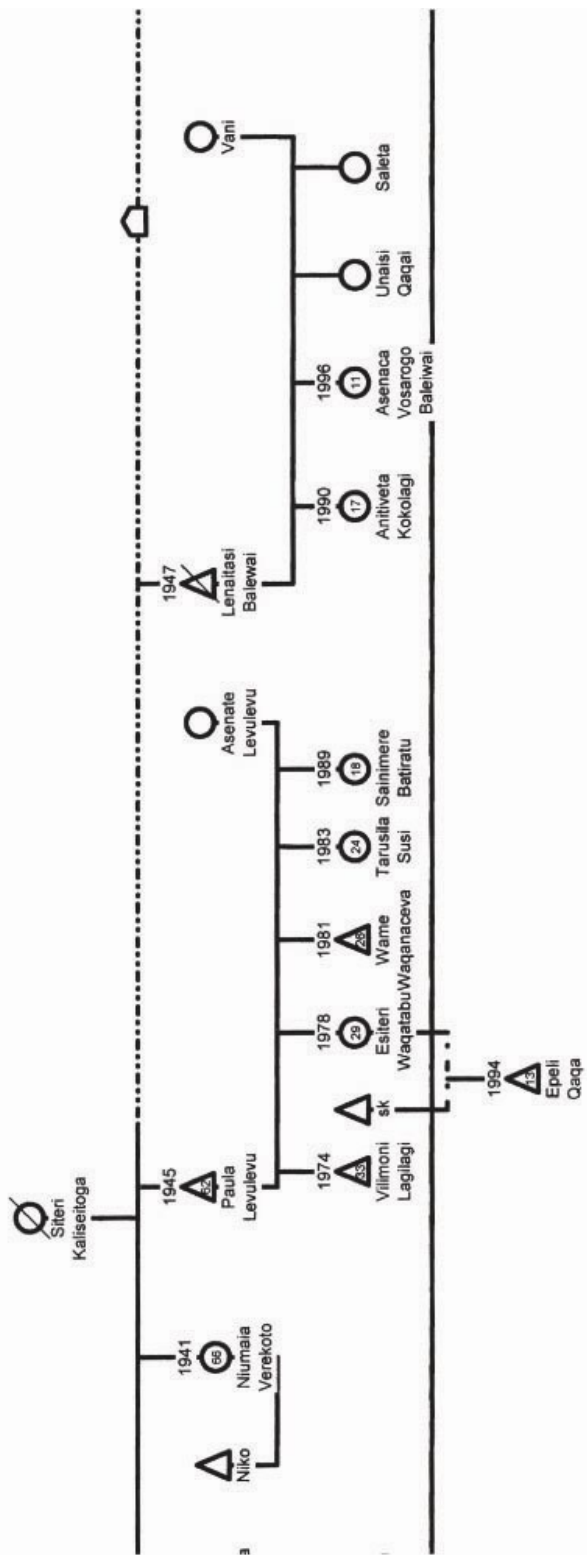
Moses
Naivalu

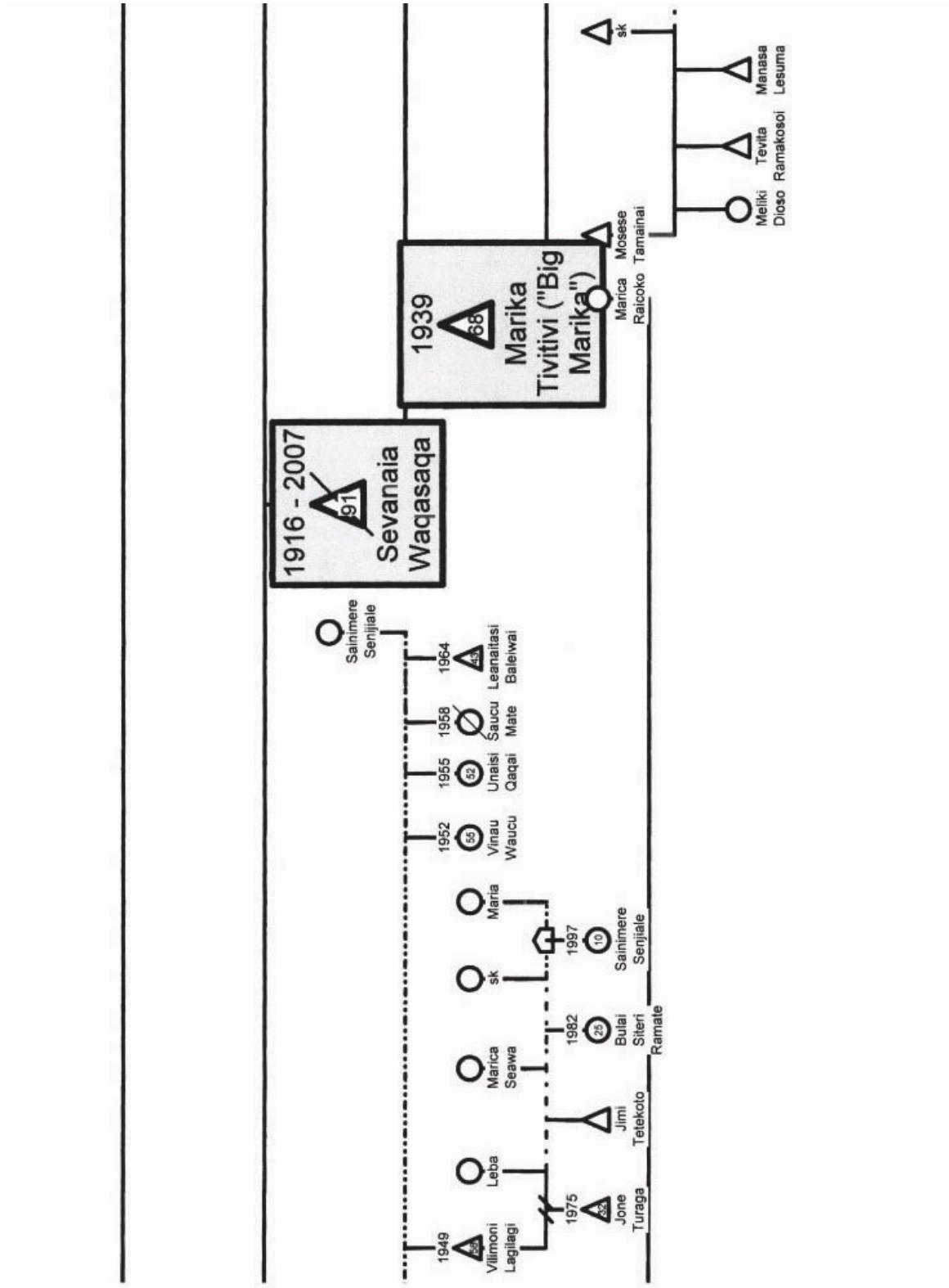
1904 - 1972

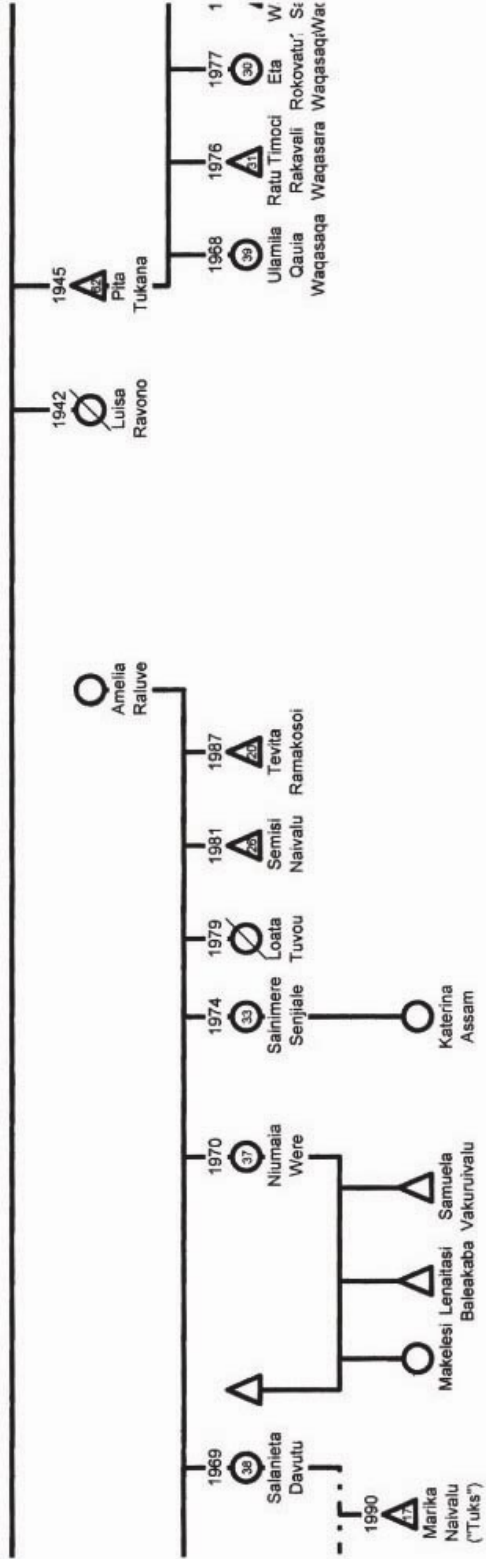
Semi
Raikadra



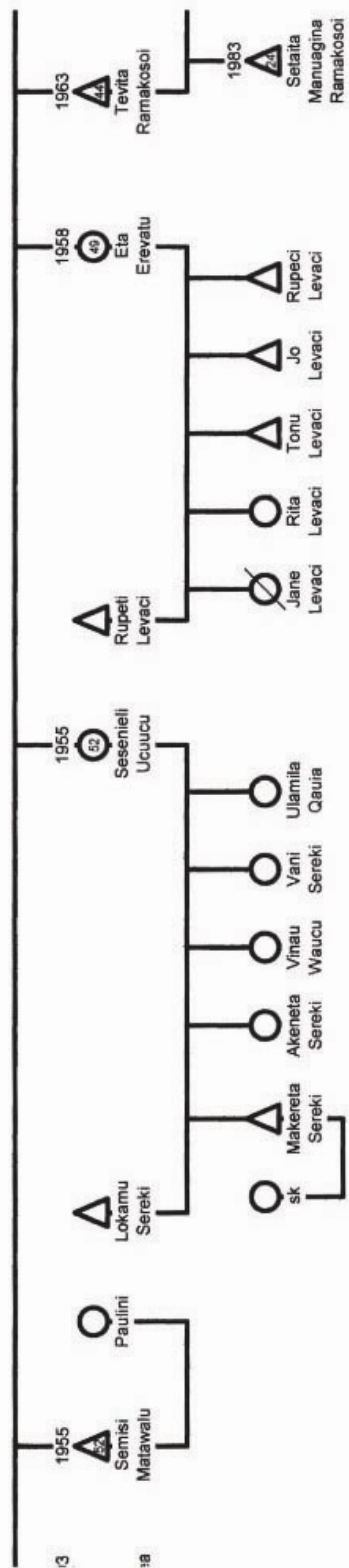


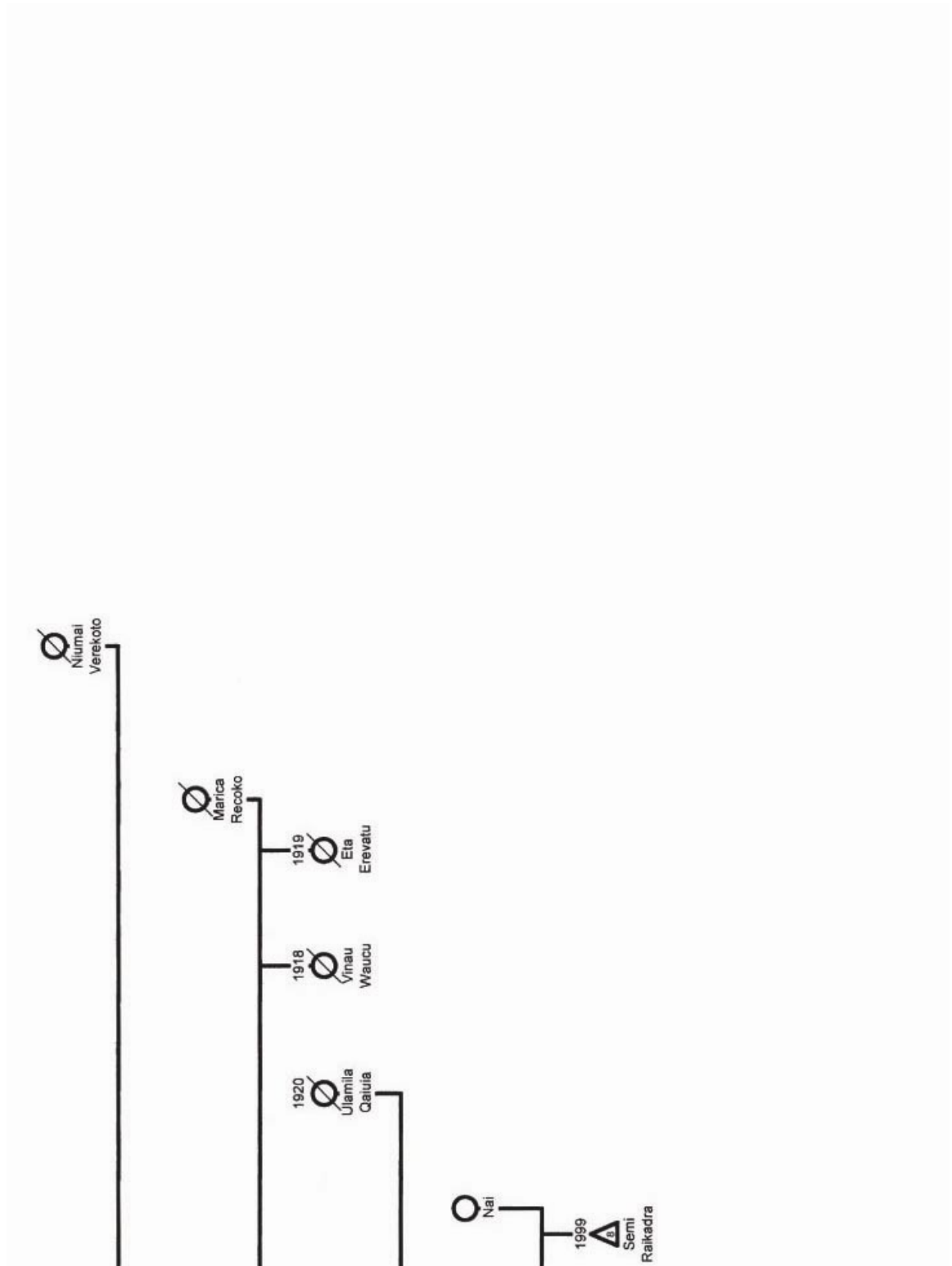












APPENDIX D

List of Beqa and Oceania firewalking references

Ainsworth, Neil

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—

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APPENDIX E
Ratu Timoci Matanitobua (Tui Sawau) 1926 Genealogical Account⁸¹⁹

Ko i au ko Ratu Timoci Matanitobua, na noqu Kalou Vu ko Masilaca, noqu manumanu na gata, noqu kau na vudi vula, na qau ika na vonu, noqu waqawaqa na qio.

I am Ratu Timoci Matanitobua, my ancestral God is Masilaca, my totemic animal is the snake, my totemic plant is known as the 'vudi vula'; my totemic fish is the turtle, whilst my 'spirit manifestation' (waqawaqa) is the shark.

Au taka mai Rewa. Au lako mai ka yaco sara mai ki Nacurumoce. Au sa mai tara koro sara kina me noqu yavutu. A kauti au mai ko Ratu, ka sa tubu me keimami lewe levu sara. Keimami sa qai mai wase vakalima ka sa yacai keimami na yavusa ko Sawau. Na keimami cavuti levu ko Nacurumoce.

I came from Rewa until I arrived at Nacurumoce. I built a village there as my 'yavutu'. I was brought by Ratu, and we have grown in numbers. We were then divided into five groups and our yavusa was called Sawau. Our tribal name is Nacurumoce.

Noqu mataqali ko Nakoroqaqa.

My clan is known as Nakoroqaqa.

- I. Mataqali ko Nakoroqaqa
 - Tokatoka ko Nakoroqaqa E ra Turaga (Chiefs)
 - Tokatoka ko Vale i Sau (e sa lala) [Empty]
- II. Mataqali ko Cagi i Ra
 - Tokatoka ko Cagi i Ra E ra Sauturaga
 - Tokatoka ko Nubulevu (e sa lala) (nobles)
- III. Mataqali ko Jilivai
 - Tokatoka ko Navusalevu
 - Tokatoka ko Naivilolo E ra Matanivanua

⁸¹⁹ Transcribed by Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga from the notes of her grandfather Ratu Timoci Matanitobua, Tui Sawau. Written on February 15, 1926.

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|-----------|
| | Tokatoka ko Solosolo | |
| IV. | Mataqali ko Jikina | |
| | Tokatoka ko Jikina | |
| | Tokatoka ko Naivilaqata | E ra Bete |
| V. | Mataqali ko Buto | |
| | Tokatoka ko Buto | |
| | Tokatoka ko Kioa | |
| | Tokatoka ko Naro | E ra Bati |

Ia, ni keimami sa tiko vakadede keimami sa tubu me lewe vuqa sara ka sa oso na neimami vanua mai na neimami yavutu ka sa qai wase tani e rua na i wase.

But while staying in the same place for quite a while our numbers grew, hence, our village and yavutu became small in size resulting in the departure of two groups from the original group.

E dua na i wase e ra lako ki Vagadra ka dua na i wase e ra lako ki Soliyaga.

One of the group moved to Vagadra whilst the other moved to Soliyaga.

Ko keimami na tiko laivi mai Nacurumoce, keimami sa tiko dede vakalailai ka ra sa qai toki cake yani na kai Sawau ki Navakaisese (Delana). Ko keitou kei iratou na neitou gonedau kei iratou na Sauturaga, keitou sa mani tikoga kina e na neitou yavutu.

The rest of us who were at Nacurumoce, stayed for while before the sawau people moved to the hilltop at Navakaisese. My clan, including the traditional fishermen and the nobles clan stayed at our yavutu [Nacurumoce].

Sa dede vakalailai na nodra tu mai Navakaisese ko ira na kai Sawau, sa qai wase tani mai na Mataqali ko Jikina e na i tokatoka ko Naivilaqata. Oqo ko iratou na kai Lomai, ka dua na kena i wase sa tawase tani mai e na Mataqali ko Buto. Oqo ko iratou na kai Levuka.

The Sawau people stayed for sometime at Navakaisese before the tokatoka Naivilaqita seperated from the Jikina Clan. These are the people from Lomai; another seperated from the Buto Clan. These were people from Levuka.

Ko i keitou, keitou tiko ga mai na yavutu ka mai tolu kina na i liuliu ni neitou mataqali. Ko Ratu, Ratu Ova kei Vakatonosau. Sa mate ko Vakatonosau ka bula na luvena ko Ratu Saumaimuri.

Those of us who stayed back at the Yavutu had three clan heads. Ratu, Ratu Ova kei Vakatonosau. Vakatonosau died and was survived by his son Ratu Saumaimuri.

Ia, ni sa dede vakalailai, keitou sa qai biuta mai na neitou yavutu ka keitou sa mai muri ira yani na neitou yavusa. Keitou sa mani la'ki tauyavutaki Vaga vata kei iratou na lewe ni noqu Mataqali kei iratou na noqu gonedau kei iratou na Sauturaga. E a kauti keitou voli mai ko Ratu Saumaimuri.

After while we left our yavutu and followed where our yavusa went. We then went and inaugurate Vaga vata, including all memebbers of my clan, my fishermen, and the sauturaga clan. It was Ratu Saumaimuri who lead our delegation.

Sa sega ni dua na ka e yaco e na nona gauna.

Sa mate ko Ratu Saumaimuri ka bula na luvena ko Ratu Golea, sa sega talega ni dua na ka e yaco e na nona gauna.

Nothing interesting happened during his time.

Ratu Saumaimuri died and survived by his son Ratu Golea, however, nothing happened during his time.

Sa mate ko Ratu Golea ka sa bula na luvena ko Ratu Kuruduadua. E sega talega ni yaco e dua na ka e na nona gauna na turaga ogo. Sa mate ko Kuruduadua ka sa bula na luvena ko Ratu Drauniivilevu. Sa labati na turaga ogo. Sa labata ga e dua na tacina, na yacana ko Ratu Tabaiwalu. E na gauna e a sa labati kina ko Ratu Drauniivilevu, e rau bula tu kina e rua na luvena, ko Ratu Vari kei Adi Tuimatanisiga. Sa mani kauti rau ko tinadrau ki Nabukelevu, Kadavu me rau lako ki susugi kina.

When Ratu Golea died he was survived by his son Ratu Kuruduadua. Nothing happened during his time. Ratu Kuruduadua died and was survived by Ratu Drauniivilevu. He was murdered. He was murdered by his brother Ratu Tabaiwalu. At the time of his murder, two of his children were alive namely Ratu Vari and Adi Tuimatanisiga. They were taken by their mother to Nabukelevu, Kadavu where they were brought up.

Sa mani mai veiliutaki kina ko Ratu Tabaiwalu vei ira na kai Sawau. Ni sa mate ko Ratu Tabaiwalu, e ra sa qai lakovi Ratu Vari yani vakavanua ki Nabukelevu ko ira na kai Sawau. Ia, ni sa yaco mai, e ra sa mai buli koya e na Masi ni Vanua, Tui Sawau ka sa buli vata kei ira na veitui ni koro e na yavusa vaka Sawau me yacova sara na “Tunidau, Daulevu”. Keitou sa mai solia kina vei iratou na gonedau na nodratou yavutu, na

nodratou mataqali ko Vale i lawa, na nodratou i tokatoka ko Vale i Lawa kei na i tokatoka ko Koronuqanuqa. Sa mai soli talega kina vei iratou na nodratou tiki ni vanua E a mai buli talega kina na Tui Rukua e na mataqali Matanivanua, na yacana na “ Tui Nadoya”

Ratu Tabaiwalu then became the head of the Sawau people. When Ratu Tabaiwalu died, Sawau people traditionally approached Ratu Vari in Nabukelevu. When he arrived he was installed as the Tui Sawau by the traditional installers of chiefs (Masi ni vanua). Simultaneously, chiefs within the different villages that make up the yavusa Sawau, even the "Tunidau, Daulevu" (head of the gonedaui) clan were installed. This was when we traditionally gave the gonedaui their own yavutu; their mataqali was known as Vale I lawa, their tokatoka was known as Vale I lawa & Koronuqanuqa. They were also given a piece of land. The Tui Rukua was also installed as the Matanivanua Clan and was traditionally called the "Tui Nadoya".

Sa qai yaco na i valu e na nona gauna ko Ratu Vari. E ra sa mani mai kauti Tui Sawau kei ira na nona gonedaui ko ira na kai Sawau ki Vagadra, ka me ra lako ki maroroi kina. E ra sa kabati keimami kina na kai Raviravi ka ra mani sega ni rawai kina. Na vuna na i valu ni via kovea na masi ni Tui Sawau ko Tui Raviravi.

A war happened during Ratu Vari's era. Then Tui Sawau and his gonedaui (Sawau people) were taken to Vagadra where they were kept and protected. The Raviravi people try to conquer us but did not. The reason behind the war was that the Tui Raviravi wanted the Tui Sawau title.

E ra mai vala ko Sawau kei Rukua baleta ni ko Ratu Vari e mai kucuva na marama ka a duguci me watina na “Bainivalu” E mate kina e 10 na kai Sawau.

Sawau fought with Rukua because Ratu Vari tried to rape the lady that was engaged to the "Bainivalu". 10 people from Sawau died during the battle.

Ia, ni oti era baci vala ko Naceva kei keimami na kai Sawau e na vuku ni yalewa ni Naceva ko Sorowaqa ni veicavutaki mai ki Dakuibeqa. E ra tiko e na gauna koya na kai Sawau mai Dakuibeqa. E ra sa qai tagi i valu na kai Naceva ki Rukua, Raviravi, Nawaisomo, Navuli kei Serua. Sa yaco sara yani na i tukutuku ki Rewa vua na Roko Tui Dreketi mai vua na Tui Raviravi. Ni sa rogo mai vei keimami na i naki koya, e ra sa baci sogo vata yani na kai Sawau ki Vagadra ka viri bai. E ra sa yaco mai na veimataivalu ka sa ra mai tara koro ni valu ka wavolivolita na neimami koro ko Vagadra.

After, a battle also arose between Naceva and Sawau because of a girl from Naceva by

the name of Sorowaqa who was taken to be the wife of someone in Dakuibeqa. At that time, the Sawau people lived in Dakuibeqa. The people from Naceva requested the assistance (in battle) of those at Rukua, Raviravi, Nawaisomo, Navuli and Serua. The Tui Raviravi even sent a similar request to the Roko Tui Dreketi at Rewa. When we heard of their proposition, all the Sawau converged at Vagadra and begin to fortify the place. The armies (enemies) built their camps around the fortress at Vagadra.

Ko Roko Tui Dreketi e tiko mai na i Cibaciba ko Rukua, ko ira na Teri mai Serua e ra tiko mai Vatusiunalulu, ko Nawaisomo e Koroidoli, ko Raviravi e Udukadi, ko Navuli mai Nautonibokoi, ko Naceva mai Waiyalewa kei Deuba mai Nakoronawa. Sa rauta e dua na vula, sa qai vakananuma ko Roko Tui Dreketi kevaka e yaco na i valu e na levu sara na tamata e ra na mate kina ka na tubu talega kina na leqa ni vanua ka sa qai talatala yani ki vua na Tui Sawau ki Vagadra. E ratou a kau i tukutuku kina ko Ratu Viliame, Ratu Vuru, Ro Sorokoverata kei Nodrakoro ki vua na Tui Sawau me tukuna kina na nona i tukutuku na Roko Tui Dreketi ka me yalovinaka na Tui Sawau kei na vanua me soro mai, ka me nona i soro na Masi ni Tui Sawau.

Roko Tui Dreketi stayed at the icibaciba (departure point of souls) at Rukua, the Teri people from Serua stayed at Vatusiunalulu, those from Nawaisomo stayed at Koroidoli, those from Raviravi resided at Udukadi, those from Navuli stayed at Nautonibokoi, those from Naceva at Waiyalewa and those from Deuba at Nakoronawa. After, almost a month had passed, Roko Tui Dreketi realised that if the battle had occurred, there would be a lot of casualties, and the vanua would suffer, thus he called for the Tui Sawau at Vagadra. Those who were the messengers (to the Tui Sawau) were Ratu Viliame, Ratu Vuru, Ro Sorokoverata, and Nodrakoro to herald the message of the Roko Tui Dreketi to the Tui Sawau and the vanua to kindly 'cease fire' and give up the title of Tui Sawau.

E ra sa mani lewa na turaga kei Sawau vata kei na Tui Sawau me sa ia na soro ka sa i soro kina na masi ki vua na Roko Tui Dreketi. Sa mai kau yani ki Rewa na masi ka sa mai suka sara yani na i valu.

All elders of Sawau including the Tui Sawau agreed to the cease-fire and gave the title to the Roko Tui Dreketi. The title was then taken to Rewa, and the battle retreated.

Sega ni dede sa baci caka tale e dua na i valu. e ra a tagi i valu mai ki vei keimami na kai Sawau ko ira na kai Naceva, e a kau mai vei keimami e rua na tabua, dua mai vua na Vunivalu mai Serua ka dua mai vua na Qaranivalu mai Kadavu ka kerei keimami mai kina me keimami lako ki vukei Naceva. Ogo me keimami vala vata kei Rukua. Na vuni i

valu ni ra sa mai teitei tiko e na nodra vanua vakaveitalia ka tauri talega kina e so na yalewa. Sa ia na i valu ka mate kina e dua vei keimami ka dua mai Rukua. Oti ogo e ra sa mai to vata kei Rukua ko Beqa kece ka dua nai to ko Sawau kei Naceva ka sa ra baci lako yani ki kabati Vagadra. E mate kina e dua vei ira ka oti e ra sa mai suka yani.

Not for long, another battle arose. Those from Naceva sought the assistance of the people of Sawau. They brought two whales tooth, one from the Vunivalu(head) of Serua, and one from the Qaranivalu of Kadavu, requesting our assistance and presence at Naceva, so that we could fight Rukua. The reason for the battle was that there were a lot of unnecessary planting without the landowner's approval and the stealing of their (Naceva) women. After the battle, one of our men and another from Rukua also died. After the battle, Rukua and all of Beqa joined forces while Sawau and Naceva became partners and they all met (to fight) at Vagadra. A member of the other army (Rukua & all beqa group) died, thus, they retreated.

Ia, ni keimami sa mai tiko yani, sa qai kele mai ko Tui Lau (Maafu) ka rau lako vata mai kei na Qaranivalu mai Kadavu ka laki tubera e dua na tabua na Qaranivalu ki Vagadra me i vakabale ni bai. Sa qai lewa ko Tui Lau me ra soqoni vata mai na turaga kei Beqa ka sa qai tukuna ko Tui Lau me sa mudu vakadua na i valu. Sa qai tukuna vei ira me ra lako yani na tamata bula me ra lako ki tea e dua na nona loga ni vauvau mai Vanua Balavu. E ra sa qai vodo yani e na Karolaini kei na Tui Nayau kei na Perinisi ka ra sa qai kila kina ni ra sa kau vakavesu ka laki yabaki lima mai Lau.

After the battle, the Tui Lau (Maafu) landed ashore with the Qaranivalu of Kadavu who brought a *tabua* to traditionally remove the protective fences at Vagadra. Tui Lau then requested that all the chiefs and elders of Beqa converge and told them that battles should end. He then told all men in full strength to go to Vanua Balavu to help in his cotton plantation. They then travelled on the 'Karolaini' and the 'Tui Nayau' and the 'Perinisi'. Later they realised that were taken as prisoners, sentenced to five years in Lau.

Ia, na Tui Sawau kei Tui Rukua, e sa lewa mai na Roko Tui Dreketi me rau mai kau vakavesu yani. Na Tui Sawau sa tiko mai Rewa vata kei ira na nona goneda, na Tui Rukua sa kau sara yani ki Bau. Ia, e na gauna e sa lewai kina me suka mai ko Tui Rukua sa mani madua me lesu mai ki nona koro, ka sa mani kunati koya mai Bau.

Also the Tui Sawau and Tui Rukua were ordered by the Roko Tui Dreketi to be taken as prisoners. The Tui Sawau was then taken to Rewa with his goneda. The Tui Rukua was then taken to Bau. However, by the time he was released he was too ashamed to go back

to his village hence he committed suicide.

Ia, ni sa lesu mai ko Ratu Vari (Tui Sawau) vata kei ira na nona gonedau ka ra yaco mai ki Beqa ka tiko dede vakalailai sa vakarewa na kuila (1874).

When Ratu Vari (Tui Sawau) and his gonedau returned, a short time after their arrival, Fiji was ceded to Great Britain (1874).

Ia, ni sa mate ko Ratu Vari, sa bula na luvena ko Ratu Peceli Vitaukitoga. Na turaga ogo e sa qai lako yani ki Rewa me lako ki solevu vua na Roko Tui Dreketi ka me luvata mai kina na masi ni vanua, Tui Sawau. Sa luva oti mai Rewa na masi ka se sega ni buli e na masi koya ko Ratu Peceli e sa mai mate yani. Ia, ni sa mate sa bula tiko kina ko au, Ratu Timoci Matanitobua kei na taciqa ko Ratu Aca Naborisi.

When Ratu Vari died, he was survived by his son Ratu Peceli Vitaukitoga. He was the person who travelled to Rewa to formally give to the Roko Tui Dreketi the masi ni vanua (title) of Tui Sawau. Ratu Peceli died before the title was brought back from Rewa so that he could be installed. However, when he died, he was survived by myself, Ratu Timoci Matanitobua and my younger brother, Ratu Aca Naborisi.

APPENDIX F
Variants of the *talanoa* of *Vilavilarevo*

- i *Na Mata* (1885)
- ii Thomson (1894)
- iii Toganivalu (1914)
- iv Bulivou (1978)
- v Kuruiwaca (2004)
- vi PHCC version
- vii FVB version



NA MATA.

(AI VOLA I TUKUTUKU VAKA VITI.)

SA NA VOLAI KINA NAI TUKUTUKU KEI VITI: KEI NA KA ESO SA ROGO-
VAKI MAI NA VEI MATANITU TANI. KA ME KILAI E VITI NAI ROGO-
ROGO NI KA E VUQA SA YACO TIKO E VURAVURA.

18.]

SUVA, 30 NOVEBA.

[1885.

MAI NAMOLIWAU.

Nai talanoa ni Viti vei ira na Turaga ni Viti.

Na veitukuni mai na koro ko Navakaisese na Tikina ko Sawau mai Beqa, ni sa vakarau na veitukuni mai na nodra burelevu, na yaca ni nodra bure ko Nakauema, sa ra veivonakitaka na nodra nabu ni veitukuni, sa vaka nai voli ni tukuni vei koya sa tukuni sa ra dui kacivi na yacadra yadua na tamata ka tarogi vei ira nodra dui nabu, ka ra sa dui cavuta mai na kakamu buta me ra duikanta mai ki na nodra burelevu ena yakavi ni siga tani ka dua. Sa qai tarogi edua na tamata, yacana ko Tuiqalita; sa kaya ko koya me nona nabu na dua ka raica koto na kena qara mai Namoliwai, sa kaya me la'ki tara mai ena mataka oda na qai mai kania ena yakavi ni mataka. Sa qai kaya na dau ni tukuni yacana ko Dredre i—

Sa vinaka sara oqori Tuiqalita na nomu nabu mo la'ki tara sara mai ena mataka.

Sa qai vakarau ko Dredre me tukuna vei ira. Ia ni sa tukuna tiko ka sa lomaloa ni begi na vanua. Era sa qai more koto, ena mataka cake era sa dui sou ki vei kau ki qara nodra nabu ni veitukuni. Sa qai lako tu ko Tuiqalita ki Namoliwai ki na vanua sa raica koto mai kina na qara ni dua, ni sa yaco yani kina sa vaka tekivu sara me kolia na dua, sa tatara yani ki na loma ni qara ka sa rui qara levu tu mai, ka sa qai guraka sara ni kolia ia ni sa qeta mai sa baki tatara tale, sa qai tara mai na dau ni vanu ka bita mai ki tuba, ka baki tatara tale sa tara mai na dresudresu ni malo, na ka ruarua koya sai cara ni dedra na gono, sa qai kaya e lomana ko Tuiqalita, vaka! Sa qara ni gone beka oqo? sa vinaka ga, me-gone se Kalou, se dua na tamata vou au na tara ga ka kanta ki neitou

me la'ki noqu nabu ki burelevu; ia ni sa vaka oti oqo sa qai baki kolia tale vaka levu ka guraka sara na qara me levu sara, sa qai qeta ka tatara yani sa qai tara na liga ni tamata, ka qeta tale vakalailai ka tara na domo ni tamata, kei na uluna, ka sa qai tu matua ka taura na ligana ka savonaka cake mai ki gusu ni qara ka sa rawa mai ki cake, sa mai tiko e matai Tuiqalita, sa qai obo tiko e matana ka vaka, ai saka Tuiqalita! noqu turaga, au bula saka, ka'u nomu kalou ni valu; sa kaya ko Tuiqalita; kei au, noqu mataqali ko Naivilaqata keimami valu levu na sai Sawau sa'u rayu lau dua ga ko au, ia na vanua oqo ko Beqa sa yanuyanu lailai sa rauti au ga; sa la'ki vakamamasu tale. Au nomu kalou ni veitiga; keimami veitigalevu ka'u kalia ga ko au; sa laki masu tale. Au nomu kalou ni yau; sa kaya sa rauti au noqu malo e knu mai Kadavu. Sa la'ki vakamamasu tale. Au nomu kalou ni soko. Sa kaya ko koya. Kei au na waqa vuni drou na kai Vanua au cata na soko, edua ga na Vatalevu sa tiko ena noqu tiki ni koro, yaca ni vatu oqori na waqa ni kai Sawau. Sa muci masu tale. Au nomu kalou ni yalewa, e nomu kece na yalewa e Beqa. Sa kaya, e sega, e rauti au edua ga na yalewa ni'u saga se ni turaga, ko ilo ga ko sa la'ki noqu unbu ni veitukuni ki burelevu ki Nakauema. Sa qai taro tale ko Tuiqalita, ko cei na yacamu? sa kaya, kei au saka ko Tui Namoliwai na noqu koro ga na qara ko ni sa tarai au mai kina oqo: mo ni vosoti au saka mada me'u vosa tale yani vei kemuni. Sa kaya tale vasa, mo vosa mai Tui Namoliwai. Ke au dua na nomuni vivavi masawa levu na kai Sawau daru vavi vata kei kemuni ka bogi va ka daru qai kili mai. Sa qai vaka donua ko Tuiqalita nona vosa ko yu. Sa qai bula. Ena mataka cake ka dua erau sa qai vaka tubura kina edua na

⁸²⁰ Published on *Na Mata* 30 November 1885 (n.a.), and successively translated and published in English by F. Arthur Jackson a resident of Fiji on *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 1894(3): 73-4.

lovo me rau vavi kina, ia ni sa raravo na lovo
 sa qai liu ko Tui Namoliwai ki na lovo, ka sa
 qai haei toka mai; Sobu mai Tuiqalita noqu
 turnga. Sa kaya ko Tuiqalita, De ko temaki sa
 ga ka'u sobu yani ka'u laki mate; sa kaya mai,
 e sega mei ana tale li ni noqu buta na mate, so-
 bu ga mai. Sa qai sobu vua sa butuka na buka kei
 na vatu ko Tuiqalita ka sa batataba vua, sa qai
 kaya ko Tuiqalita ko sa qai bulá Tui Namoliwai.
 Ia me kua so ga ni bulu tu me bogi va me lako
 walega ki na lovo me vaka edaru sa kitaka edai-
 dai de mani velaveia soti na bogi va ni sa rui
 dede. Ia ni sa vaka koya sa qai yalayala ko
 Tui Namoliwai ka kaya na nomu kawa sa lako
 e Viti tancoko se ki Toga ena yacovi ira kecega
 na nodaru vei yalayalati ogo era na butuka
 kecega na lovo se na buka. Ia ni sa qai la'ki
 sevutaki sara ni ra sa vavi masawe laru na kai
 Sawai ki Nalovo edua na yaca ni vanua ko ya
 sa qai butuka kina ko Tuiqalita era sa kurabui
 kecega kina ni ra qai raica. Ia ni sa ia na
 boso ni yasana ko Rewa sa la'ki caka mai Beqa
 ka kei rau sa vei vosa ki kei na Talai ni Kovana
 me ia mada me raica. Ia ka sa raica sa na
 vinaka beka ga me tukuna ko koya vei kemuni.

Both these had evidently been used on a child. Tui N'Kualita exclaimed at this, "Good gracious this must be the Cave of Children, but say how, it is all right, let it be a child or even a god or a new kind of man, I'll take it to be my Nembu." He then dug away with all his might to make a big opening, and again putting his arm in, touched a man's hand; a little further and he touched his head and his throat. Then he caught him firmly by the arm and dragged him up. Then the man clasped his hands* in front of Tui N'Kualita and said "O Tui N'Kualita, my chief, spare my life, and I will be your god of war, for I too am a chief with villages under me. My name is Tui Namoliwai." Tui N'Kualita replied "I come from a tribe known as Naivilanata. We had a great fight and I alone slew the enemy. Beuga is but a small island and I require no assistance." He again prayed "Let me be your god of war."† "I play that game and beat all comers" said Tui N'Kualita. "Let me be your god of property?" "No, the *Tapa*, i.e., Native cloth I receive from Kadavu suffices." "Then let me be your god of cruising?" "I am a landman, and the Vunidran tree suffices for what I require, and I hate sailing. There is a large stone in my part of the town which is called the canoe of the people of Sawau." He begged again, "Let me be your god of women and you shall have all the women in Beuga." Tui N'Kualita replied, "One woman is sufficient for me, for I am not a big chief." "Come you must be my Nembu to the story-teller at the great *Bure* at Nakauema." Then Tui Namoliwai said, "Be gracious and allow me to speak," he said, "Speak on, Tui Namoliwai." If you happen to have a large quantity of measee at Sawau, let us be cooked in it together, and after four days we will be taken out." The next morning they went, and prepared a great oven to be cooked in, and when it was ready Tui Namoliwai went into it first, and then called out to Tui N'Kualita to follow him. Tui N'Kualita said, "Perhaps you are deceiving me and I shall die." He said, "No, am I to give you death in exchange for life, come down." He did so and he trod on the fire and hot stones and they were quite cool to him. Then he said, "Tui Namoliwai your life is spared, but let us not be burned four days in it, but let us always get into the oven like this, for who would care for my family if I stayed so long in the oven." Then Tui Namoliwai promised and said, "Your descendants shall go all over Fiji and to Toga (Tonga), and our promises shall be ever with them, and they shall tread on fire and go into the ovens." When the people at Navolo were cooking a large oven of measee then Tui N'Kualita went into it, and all who saw him were astonished at what they saw, (End of legend).

* To Cook, i.e., clap the hands, is a salute and mark of homage to a chief. On approaching the house of a chief the common people Tinea (a sort of abomb, different in the different provinces), as a mark of respect. There is one Tinea for men, another used by women. On passing a chief on the road, both men and women Tinea. When a chief passes through a town the occupants of every house Tinea as the chief passes their house. On presenting a lighted *Sakala* (cigar) to a chief, the man or woman comes up to the chief with the neck bent, presents the *Sakala* (cigar), and retire backwards a short distance, then sit down and Cook's, i.e., claps his or her hands. This is done also whenever the chief sends to shake hands (European fashion), with a comraiser. The most profound respect and homage is always given and shown towards a chief by every Fijian.—F. A. J.

† *Tapa*, pronounced Ting-gah, is a highly popular game of skill.—F. A. J.

TRANSLATION FROM "NA MATA" OF 30TH NOVEMBER, 1886.

AT NAMOLIWAI.

A FIJIAN LEGEND FOR THE CHIEFS OF FIJI.

THIS meeting of story-telling took place at Na Vakaisese in the Sawau district, at Beuga, in the large *Bure** called Nakauema. They first made enquiries as to whether all had brought their offering to present to the story-teller of the coming evening. The story-teller called for each man to name his Nembu, i.e., his present to the story-teller. (Each man in naming his Nembu would espouse the others). One person named Tui N'Kualita was called upon and he said he would bring an eel he saw in his hole at Na Molivai, and that he would go and get it the next day. Dressed, the leading story-teller agreed, and began to tell his story and continued on till midnight, and early next morning they each went to get their Nembu to be given to the story-teller. Tui N'Kualita went to Na Molivai where he had seen the eel's hole and commenced to dig down for it. He put his arm down for it but could not reach it, he however worked hard at it, and again tried and pulled out some bark, this he threw away and tried again, this time he got hold of a piece of *Tapa*, i.e., Native cloth.

* *Bure* means "a sleeping house for men"; in the old days Fijians never slept with their wives in their own private houses; the young married men and bachelors all slept together in a *Bure*, where they passed the evenings singing songs (smoking *Sakala*, i.e., cigarettes) and drinking *Kava* (called in Fiji *Yagoma*); one large house called there, if he was the visitors' *Bure*. The old men had a *Bure* to themselves. The large *Bure* were used as above, for meetings, for story-telling. Women never went to the *Bure*. They were men's clubs.—F. A. J.

† Tui N'Kualita is the proper name, "N'Kualita and N'Kualita" is a misprint in the translation sent to me by His Excellency Sir John Thurston.—F. A. J.

THE FIERY FURNACE.

OF the ancient Fijian ceremonies few now survive. The early missionaries are unjustly charged with bigotry and Philistinism, in having waged war on all native ceremonial connected, however remotely, with their heathen creeds. But the Wesleyan missionaries were before all things practical, and knew that if Christianity was to take root at all it must have bare soil, from which every weed had been carefully torn up ; for savage converts have an easy-going tendency towards engrafting Christianity upon their old beliefs,—in discovering that Jehovah is only another name for Krishna or Ndengei, and that the ritual that pleased the one cannot be unacceptable to the other.

But in one corner of Fiji, the island of Mbengga, a curious observance of mythological origin has escaped the general destruction, probably because the worthy

⁸²¹ Published in *South Sea Yarns* 1894: 195-201.

iconoclasts had never heard of it. Once every year the *maskee*, a dracana that grows in profusion on the grassy hillsides of the island, becomes fit to yield the sugar of which its fibrous root is full. To render it fit to eat, the roots must be baked among hot stones for four days. A great pit is dug and filled with large stones and blazing logs, and when these have burned down, and the stones are at white heat, the oven is ready for the *maskee*. It is at this stage that the clan Na Ivilankata, favoured of the gods, is called on to "leap into the oven" (*releta na loto*), and walk unharmed upon the hot stones that would scorch and wither the feet of any but the descendants of the dauntless Tui Nkualita. Twice only had Europeans been fortunate enough to see the *maskee* cooked, and so marvellous had been the tales they told, and so cynical the scepticism with which they had been received, that nothing short of another performance before witnesses and the photographic camera would have satisfied the average "old hand."

As we steamed up to the chief's village of Waisoma, a cloud of blue smoke rolling up among the palms told us that the fire was newly lighted. We found a shallow pit, nineteen feet wide, dug in the sandy soil, a stone's throw from high-water mark, in a small clearing among

the cocoa-nuts between the beach and the dense forest. The pit was piled high with great blazing logs and round stones the size of a man's head. Mingled with the crackling roar of the fire were loud reports as splinters flew off from the stones, warning us to guard our eyes. A number of men were dragging up more logs and rolling them into the blaze, while, above all, on the very brink of the fiery pit, stood Jonathan Dambua, directing the proceedings with an air of noble calm. As the stones would not be hot enough for four hours, there was ample time to hear the tradition that warrants the observance of the strange ceremony we were to see; and so seated on the spotless mats in Jonathan's house, I listened while a grey-headed elder told me the story; pausing only to ask his fellows to corroborate, or to supply some incident that had slipped his memory.

"On an evening," he said, "very long ago, the men of Navakaisese had collected in their sleeping-house for the night. Now the name of that house was Nakanyema. And they were telling stories, each trying to surpass the other in the story that he told. And one of them, whose name I have forgotten, called upon each to name the reward (*uambu*) he would give him for the story he was about to tell; for it is our custom

thus to encourage a good story-teller, each one bringing to him on the morrow the *nambu* he has promised. And some promised one thing and some another. But Tui Nkualita, a chief and warrior of the Na Ivilankata clan, cried 'My *nambu* shall be an eel!' Then the story was told, and the night passed. And on the morrow Tui Nkualita remembered the spring called Namoliwai, that he had seen a large eel in it. And when he came to it, and, kneeling on the brink, plunged his hand into it, he could not feel the bottom though the water reached his shoulder, for the pool was deeper than formerly; and he reached yet farther down, following the rocky hole with his hand, and he touched something. He drew it out, and saw that it was a child's cradle-mat. Then, wondering greatly, he plunged his arm into the pool, and reached yet farther down, and touched something. And as he felt it, he knew it for the fingers of a man. 'Whoever this may be,' he said within himself, 'he shall be my *nambu*.' And he plunged half his body into the water, feeling with his hand until he touched a man's head. Then grasping the hair he dragged it upwards, and planting his feet firmly, he drew forth the body of a man, and held it fast on the brink of the spring.

"Whoever you are," he cried, "you shall be my *nambu*."

"You must save me," answered the man, "for I am a chief, and have a village of my own, and many others who pay tribute to me."

"What is your name?"

"Tui na Moliwai (chief of Moliwai)."

"I know all the chiefs of Mbengga, and many also on the mainland, but I never heard of Tui na Moliwai. I only know that you must come with me and be my *nambu*."

"Have pity on me, and let me live."

"Let you live? Why, of what use will you be to me alive?"

"I will be your guardian spirit in war."

"No. Mbengga is small, and I am mightier than all others in war."

"Then I will be your god of safe voyages."

"I am no sailor. My home is the land, and I hate the sea."

"Then let me help you on the *tinka*-ground."

"When the game is played my lance flies truer and stronger than them all."

"Then I will make you beloved of women."

"I have a wife who loves me, and I want no other. What else?"

"Then I will do more than all these. You shall pass unharmed through fire."

"If you can do that I may spare you; but if you fail you shall be my *manawa*."

Then the god gathered brushwood together, and piled it with stones in a little hollow, and made fire, and lighted it, and they sat down to wait until the stones grew hot. And when the wood had burned to ashes, and the stones were red with heat, the god rose and took Tui Nkualita by the hand, saying, 'Come, let us go into the oven.'

"What! And be roasted while living?"

"Nay," returned the god, 'I would not return evil for good. It shall not burn you.'

Then Tui Nkualita took his hand, and lay on the hot stones, finding them cool and pleasant to his body.

And Tui na Moliwai said, 'You shall stay four days in the oven, and be unharmed.'

"Four days? And who shall find food for my wife and children while I am there? No! Let me only pass through the fire as I have done, and come out unharmed. I ask no more than this."

"It is well. This gift shall be yours and your descendants' for ever. Whether you stay here or go to other countries, this power shall remain with you."

So Tui Nkualita let Tui na Moliwai go alive, and returned to his home at Navakaisese, telling no one what had befallen him. But on the day when *masase* was cooked at Wakanisalato, and the oven was heated, Tui Nkualita rose and sprang into the great pit, tramping the burning stones unharmed, and treading down the green leaves as they were thrown to line the oven, so that he was hidden in the steam. And the people raised a great shout, wondering much when they saw him come out alive and unharmed. Thus it came about that whenever *masase* is cooked in Mbeugga, the people of Iukua and Sawau must first leap into the oven to make the baking good; and if yams or other food were put into the oven with the *masase*, they would be taken out at the end of four days still raw.

THE FIRE-WALKERS. (A VILA-VILAIREVO).

(Paper by Deve Toganivalu, the Roko Tui Bua, translated and read by Mr. G. A. F. W. Beauclerc, before the Fijian Society on March 9, 1914.)

"Vilavilatrevo" is a Beqa word, its meaning in the Bau language being "Rikata na lovo," and in English 'Jumping into the oven.' The Beqa people jump into the hot ovens, and tread on the fire and the hot stones, and are not burned. Now their treading on the hot stones inside of the ovens has no trickery about it such as is practised by jugglers. It is said that their treading the hot ovens had its origin in the very ancient times, and that their descendants have continued it down to the present. If a descendant of the Beqa people be in another country, he can tread on the hot stones in the oven. The name of this custom is with them "Vilavilatrevo," or 'jumping into the oven.'

In this paper I will give an account of the commencement of the "Vilavilatrevo" being performed at Beqa, as follows:—

In a certain town on Beqa called Navakaisese, in the district of Sawau, there was in former times a large public building called Nakauema, and in that building they used to assemble for story-telling. It was the practice when preparing to hold a story-telling to ask those who came wishing to hear, to say what would be their "nabu," that is, the thing they would contribute to reward the storyteller. And when each had named his "nabu," the storyteller would commence his tale.

On a certain night they were preparing for a story-telling at Nakauema, the public hall, and each had been asked what would be his "nabu," and each had mentioned various kinds of food as their "nabu," to be brought to

the hall in the morning. And when a certain man named Tuiqalita was asked what would his "nabu" be, he said it would be an eel which he constantly saw in its hole at Namoliwai, and after this the storyteller, whose name was Dredre, began his tale. The story-telling went on till midnight, and they went to sleep. In the morning each went his way to prepare his "nabu." And Tuiqalita went right away to Namoliwai, to dig up the hole of the eel which he had seen, to be his "nabu;" and when he arrived, he began at once to dig the eel's hole; and reaching in to the inside he found that it was very spacious, and he felt a man's hand inside the hole, and he caught hold and hauled him up. And when he had got him up, he sat down in front of Tuiqalita and made obeisance; and said: "Oh, Sir, Tuiqalita my chief, let me live and I will be your god of war." Tuiqalita replied: "We, Sawau people, go to war, and I slay single-handed. Beqa is only a small island and I am able for it." Then he offered to be his god for the "tira" games, or for property, or for sailing, or for women; but Tuiqalita refused, and told him that he would take him to be his "nabu" for the story-telling at Nakauema, the public hall. Tuiqalita then asked him his name, and he replied, "My name, Sir, is Tui Namoliwai, and my town is the cave from which you took me, please bear witness me, Sir, while I speak again to you." Tuiqalita assented and then Tui Namoliwai said, "If you, Sawau people, have a general (or communal) dracena-roasting, you and I will get roasted to-

⁸²² Written by Deve Toganivalu (Roko Tui Bua) (transl. by Mr. G.A.F. W. Beauclerc and read before the Fijian Society on March 9, 1914).

gether with the dracaena for four days, and we will then be dug out, uninjured." Tuiqalita consented and spared Tui Namoliwai.

Next morning they two prepared an oven to be cooked in, and when the oven was red-hot Tui Namoliwai jumped into it, and then called out, "Come down, Tuiqalita, my chief." Tuiqalita answered, "Perhaps you are only imposing on me, so that I may die;" but he said, "Not so, would I pay for my life with your death? come on, down." Tuiqalita then went down into the oven and trod on the fire and on the hot stones, but they were cold to him. Then said Tuiqalita, "Now you are spared, Tui Namoliwai, but let us not be covered up for four days, let us only tread on the hot stones as we are doing, four days is too long for us to be buried up." Then said Tui Namoliwai, "This, our covenant, will extend to all your descendants hereafter, they will be able to tread on the fire and the hot stones in the dracaena ovens."

a general dracaena cooking at a *niac*

Well, one day the Nasau people had called Nalovo, and Tuiqalita sprang into the oven, and they were all astonished, seeing for the first time the stepping about on the fire and the hot stones in the oven. This was the commencement of the "Vilavilavevo," which was performed by Tuiqalita, and which has been continued by his descendants down to the present time.

NAI TEKITEKIVU NI VILAVILA-I-REVU

Niu sa qai mai cokoti ira vata nai talanoa ni vilavila i revu mai na koro e tolu ko Rukua, Dakuibeqa kei Dakuni sa qai mai volai rawa kina nai talanoa ogo. E vaka sa lutu toka vakalevu e vica na ka e vakavuna me sa sega kina ni nanumi e so na ka. Me yacova mai ni kua sa sega sara ga ni dua na kawa ni kete dina e bula tiko. Sa qai mai soli yani nai tutu oqori vei iratou na nona lewe ni yavusa me yacova tu mai na gauna ni kua. Sa yaka e duidui mai na kena i talanoa me vaka ni sa tete tiko mai ena gauna ni kua. Nai vakarau talega ni kena qaravi sa veisau sara vakalevu.

Ni sa oti na kena qai mai tawani na yanuyanu ko Beqa mai vei ira na kenai taukei ena gauna ni kua e a kaukauwa sara ne veivaluvaluti e ra dau vakayacora. E na vuku gona ni veivaluvaluti sa qau toki cake kina na Tui Sawau kei ira na nona tamata ki na dua na nodra i tikotiko vou. E ra a mani yacova yani e dua na delana ka ra sa namuma me ra sa tiko mada kina. Na yaca ni vanua e ra sa mai vakaitikotiko kina koya ko Navakaisese. Na yaca oqori e yaca tu vakailibalebale. Ni ra sa yaco ki Navakaisese sa ra mai vakoro sara toka kina. E dua nai vakarau era dau vakayacora tu ena gauna koya na veitukuni se veitalanoa. E dina ga nira dau qaqarauni tu ena vuku ni valu ia ena yasana kadua e caka talega na veitalanoa se veitukuni me ka ni veivakamarautaki. E bula donuya ena gauna koya e dua na dau ni tukuni ka yacana ko "DREDRE". Vakabauti ni qase qo ko DREDRE e sega tu ni vakawati ka qai dau nona cakacaka me dau talanoa tu ga vei ira na cauravou ena veiyakavi. Sa qai dua na vale levu e nodra vale tiko ni veitukuni ks yacana ko "NAKAUYAMA". E ra dau veisivisitaka na cauravou na vei ka eso me nodra nabu. Na veika eso me vaka na qalu, vakasoso, ura, dovū kei na vei ka e so ka dau okati tu me kakana vinaka vei ira ena gauna koya. Sa qai laki yacova sara na gauna me sa vesivisitaki na nodra dui nabu.

Ena dua tale na gauna ni nodra veitukuni sa yaco sara na kacikaci nabu. Sa tekivu sara na kacikaci nabu ka laki yacova sara e dua cauravou na yacana ko "TUIQALITA". Ni qai tarogi ko Tuiqalita sa yalataka sara ko koya ni na rawata mai e dua na duna me nona nabu. Sa ra qai rogoca kece sara na cauravou na ka sa yalataka ko Tuiqalita. Ena mataka ni siga ka tarava sa ra dui gole sara na cauravou ena nodra sasaga me ra rawata mai na veika e so me nodra dui nabu. Ia ko Tuiqalita sa qai maria sobu mai e dua na lolawai ka tekivu drodro mai e na ruku ni nodra i tikotiko. Sa qai gole sobu mai ka mai tekivu vakarai duna yani. E vica na tobu wai sivia yani ka sega ga ni raica e dua na ka. Vakalailai tale noi nona vakarirai sa laki yacova sara e dua na tobu wai. Ni qai raica ga na tobu koya sa kila sara ko koya ni tawa tiko ne tobu ena i nira ni wai.

Sa qai raica koya ni sa tu na De ni bonu ena loma ni tobu. Sa vakanuinui sara na yalona ni sa na qai rawata eke na nona nabu. Segā tale ni wawa ni sa lade sara ki loma ni tobu me sa tekivu tatara. Vakalailai nona kelikeli sa tekivu tara mai eso na tiki ni masi kei na vakavale lailai ni gone. Segā ni vakasuka na cauravou koya ena nona sasaga me rawata ga na ka e vinakata. Vakalailai tale sa tekivu sara me rogoca na domo ni gone. Sa caka tiko mai vua e levu na ka me rere kina me rawa ni vakasuka. Sa qai kaya toka na cauravou koya. "Na ka ga au na rawata e ke sa na noqu nabu". Dua na ka na nona yalo qaqa na cauravou koya e na nona sega ni rere. Ia e loma ni qara sa yaco tilo kina na veivosaki se ko cei vei ira me na liu mai. Ko Tuiqalita e sega ni cegu ena nona kelis tiko na qara koya.

Sa qai macala mai loma ni qara me sa liu mai na nodra i luitu. Na tatara yani ko Tuiqalita sa taura sara e dua na liga ni tamata. Taura ga na liga koya sa dreta sara mai ni yaco mai tuba sa qai vaka ko Tuiqalita ni sa tara e dua na tamata ka sega ni duna. Raica ga ko koya na tamata koya sa kaya sara, "Sa rawa noqu nabu". Ia e dua na ka e kubabui kina ko Tuiqalita ni raica na tamata koya ni tamata lailai. Qo me vaka tu beka na veli. Ia e tamata lailai dina na tamata e tara mai. Sa qai taroga ko Tuiqalita se cei ko koya. Sauma ko koya ne tamata lailai koya "Ko au ko Tuinamoliwai ka no nodra i

⁸²³ Narrated by Aporosa Bulivou, recorded by Mika Tubanavau in Rukua in 1978 (transl. by Mika Tubanavau and quoted in Crosby 1988a: 68)

Iuliu na gone e ra tiko qo e loma ni qara na yacagu ko "Cavuirerega". Kaya tale ko Tuiqalita "Au sa na kaudi iko mo noqu naba ni tukuni".

E keru sa qai tekivu vakamamasu kina ko Tuinamoliwai se ko Cavuirerega me vakabulai koya ko Tuiqalita. E dina ga ni kalou Vu tiko ko Tui Namoliwai kei ira na nona i lala, ia sa mai yacova tu qo e dua na gauna me sa kerea kina vua na tamata me vakabulai. Sa qai solia na nona maqosa kece me rawa ni vakabulai kina ko koya kei ira na nona i lala. E rau sa qai mai veiqaravi tu yani na turaga e rua qo me rau sa vei tarotarogi. Sa qai rogo e ke na vosa ni vakamamasu nei Tuinamoliwai. E vaka toka oqo na vei ka e so e tukuna ko Cavuirerega me nona i soro.
"Au bula noqu turaga me noqu kalou Vu ni Veitiga".

Sauma yani ko Tuiqalita ka vaka, "O au kevaka keimami veitiga na kai yanuyanu ko Beqa ena sega ni dua e yacovi au. Au tamata dau tiqa duadua ena yanuyanu qo".

Kerea tale ko Cavuirerega, "Au bula, Au bula meu nomu kalou ni valu".

Sauma tale yani ko Tuiqalita, "Ko au na tamata kaukauwa duadua, ena yanuyanu qo ko Beqa. Kevaka e caka nai valu ko i au duadua ga au na ravu i liu. Au tamata rerevaki sara".

Sega ni cegu nona kerekere ka baci kaya tale, "Au bula meu nomu kalou ni soko".

Kaya tale yani va qo ko Tuiqalita, "Na soko na noqu cakacaka, e sega ni dua e sivia au rawa. Au tamata dau soko duadua ga ko i au". Kerekere tale ko Tuinamoliwai, "Au bula noqu turaga meu rawa ni nomu kalou ni yau".

Kaya tale vua ko Tuiqalita, "Au tamata vaka i yau levu duadua ena yanuyanu qo ko i au. E sega ni dau e ke au kila ni sivia nai yau e tu vei au".

To so tale nona kerekere ko Tuinamoliwai ka kaya tale yani "Au bula meu nomu kalou ni yalewa".

Kaya yani ko Tuiqalita, "Ko i na tamata, rairai vinaka duadua. Sobo ko sa raici au sara tu niu tamata rairai vinaka na mai ka ni cava tale vei au na kaloua ni yalewa ko koya mai qori vei au?".

E gadreva ga ko Tuiqalita me kaudi koya me nona naba ka sega sara ni via kauwai ena nona vakamamasu ko Tui Namoliwai. E dua talega na ka e vakabeka kina ko Tuiqalita koya ni kila ni Kalou Vu ko Tui Namoliwai de mani lakolako e na lawakitaki koya ena vei ka e so sa yalataka oti tu vua. Ia e muri sa qai kaya tale ko Tui Namoliwai, "Au bula meu nomu kalou ni Vilavila i revo".

"Na cava na vilavila i revo?" a taroga ko Tuiqalita, "Vakamatalataka mada meu kila". Kaya tale yani ko Tui Namoliwai, "Oi na vilavila i revo koya na nomu lakova rawa na varu katataka ka na sega sara ni rawa ni ko kama".

Sai qai mai veidre tu yani na vakasama nei Tuiqalita se me vakadonuya se kua. Me vaka ni se sega sara tu ga ni bau kilai ena gauna koya na vilavila i revo sa qai vakadonuya ko Tuiqalita na kerekere nei Tuinamoliwai. Sa dua na ka na marau nei Tuinamoliwai ni sa vakadonuya ko Tuiqalita na nona kerekere. Sa qai kaya tale ko Tuiqalita, "Ia sa qai vo e dua na ka, koya mo na vakamataka sara mada vei au na kena i cakacaka. Au na sega mada ni laivi iko mo na lako vaka vo niu sa vaka dinadinataka na kena i cakacaka".

"Sa vinaka me daru sa na lako yani," a kaya ko Tui Namoliwai.

E rau sa qai toso mai vakalailai ki na dua na vanua tautauvata me sa mai vakaraitaki kina nai cakacaka ni vilavila i revo. Sa qai tekivu me rau kelia e dua nai revo levu ka rau yauta sara mai na buka. Ni sa bini levu tu na buka e rau sa qai kauta mai e so na watu lelevu me mai kena qoca.

Se vakaraica toka vakamalus ko Tuiqalita na ka sa caka tiko. Ni sa bini oti tu na watu ena dela ni buka sa kaya sara ko Tui Namoliwai me sa udre. E rau sa qai mai waraka toka yani me damu na watu. Ni yacova mai na gauna ni sa damu vinaka tu na qoca sa kaya tale ko Tui Namoliwai ni sa kena gauna sara ga koya me sa tala kina. Tala oti na buka sa tuva sara vakavinaka na qoca. Sa qai udre vinaka tu yani na lovo ena kena sa damudamu ka katakata vinaka tu na qoca. Dua na ka na domobula nei Tuiqalita ni raica ni sa damu tu na qoca e loma ni lovo. Rai tu ko Tuiqalita sa lako ki loma ni lovo ko Tuinamoliwai. Ni sa laki tu e loma ni lovo ko Tui Namoliwai sa qai kacivi Tuiqalita mai me lako yaniki loma ni lovo. E vaka veka tu ga na loma Tuiqalita ka vakvauta ni na lawakitaki koya ko Tui Namoliwai. Sa qai kaya yani ko Tuiqalita. "Au sa rere sara ga na lako yani deu na qai kama".

"E na sega ni rawa ni ko kama ka ni oqo sara ga na noqu i soro vei iko. E sega ni yaco vei iko e dua na ka ni ko sa vakadonuya mo vakbulai au. Lako mada mai mo mai vakadinadinataka, "e kaya ko Tui Namoliwai.

Ia ni sa yaco yani ki loma lovo sa qai kila ni batataba vinaka tu ga ka sega sara ni vakila e dua na katakata lailai. Sa qai vakadinadinataka e kari ko Tuiqalita ni sa ka dina kece na yalayala nei Tui Namoliwai.

E rau sa qai mai veitauri liga yani ka rau wavokita sa ra na loma ni lovo. Ni oti na nodrau wavoki sa kaya sara ko Tui Namolimoliwai, "Daru sa na bulu e loma ni lovo, me bogi va ka siga va, ka na sega ga ni daru kama".

"Sega sa kua, sa rauta ga i qo. Oqori sa dradraluka tale" a sauma yani vua ko Tuiqalita. E rau sa qai sega ni bula ka sa yaco ga e kea. Sa qai kaya ko Tui Namoliwai me sa qai dau vavi ga na masawe me kedrau i sosomi. Ni bera ga ni rau qai veitalatala sa qai vosa ni tatau vei koya ko Tui Namoliwai. "Au kerea meu qai dau namuni ni sa dau oti e dua na "slevu" (Vilavila i revo). Na tabu ni cakacaka oqo na yalewa kei na nui. Na nomu kawa kece mai muri me yacova nai vakataotioti kei vuruvura era na butuka tiko ga na watu katakata ka sega ni kama.

E ke e rau sa qai mai veitalatala kina na turaga e rua qo. Sa qai mai gole lesu yani ki na nodra i tikotiko ko Tui Namoliwai ka gole lesu tale mai ki Navakaisese ko Tuiqalita. E yaca tiko ni vanua e kunei kina ko ira na i lala nei Tui Namoliwai ko Namoliwai. Na yaca sa qai vaka tokai tu vei ira na Vu ni Vilavila i revo ne rere ka udolu tiko vakacaca na kedra lewe levu.

Na yaca oqori keimami kilai ira tu kina mai liu ka yacova mai ni kua. Saa qai dua na marau, levu e tu vei Tuiqalita ena ka veivakurabuitaki sa qai soli qo vua. Ni qai yaco yani ki nakoro ko Tuiqalita sa via yakavi mai na vanua. Sa tiko lo ga vua na ka levu sa kauta tiko mai ka sa qai vakaraitaka e na yakavi ga koya ena gauna era sa baci veitukuni kina. Ni qai yaco tale mai na kacikaci nabu sa vakamacalataka sara ko Tuiqalita nai lakolako ni ka sa kunea mai. Sa qai kerea me na qai vakaraitaka na nona nabu ena mataka ni siga ka dua sa qai kerea me keli e dua na lovo levu ka me yau talega mai na buka kei na watu me vaka tikoga nai cakacaka ni ka sa vakaraitaka vua ko Tui Namoliwai. E re sega ni vakabauta na tamata na ka sa vakarau vakayacora na cauravou yalo qaga oqo ko Tuiqalita. E ra sa qai kaya vua ena levu ni nodra vakatitqa, "Tamata lailia ko kila vakacava mo butuka na watu katakata. Eda kila ga ni dau vavi ga na kakana ia qo ko sa mai via vulica mo butuka. Cakava sara me dina ke sega ko na vakamatei".

Sega ni yalo lailai na cauravou koya ka toso tikoga na veitamuaravi ni ka e dedonu me cakava me yacova sara ni sa laki vakarau me sa binika. Ni qai yaco mai na gauna me sa vilaka kina esa nai tu na kena vo. Sa qai siro yani vakamalua ki loma ni lovo ka wavokita sara me vaka ga e rau a cakava kei Tui Namoliwai. E ra kurabuitaka na tamata na i solisoli levu sa kauta mai vei ira na cauravou koya. Ni sa caka tale nai karua ni lovo sa qai kerea mera sa cakava i vata me ra tovolea ka vakadinadinataka. Sa qai tekivu mai kea na nodra vila diko ana tamata me yacova tu mai na siga ni kau. Sa dua na ka kalougata ni mai kunea tu na cauravou koya nai solisoli veivakakurabuitaki koya. Yaco na gauna e muri me ra valuti e Navakausese ka sa kauta vata tu kei ira na vilvila i revo.

This version was narrated by Aporoso Bulivou of Rukua Village, Beqa. It was recorded and translated into English by Mika Tubanavau, also of Rukua, in 1978. Mika Tubanavau is a resident of the island who is interested in oral tradition. The stories given here are from his collection. The translation follows:

HOW FIREWALKING BEGAN

At the time when the Sawau people settled on Beqa Island wars were fought almost continuously between the villages. Because of this condition of warfare the Tui Sawau and his people moved up (from Nacurumoce on the coast) into the interior mountains. They selected a defensible site high up in the hills and built their settlement there at a place called Navakaisese, this word means "where the people started to scatter".

During the day the young men were occupied with work and with protecting their village, but in the evenings it was the custom for them to gather together for story telling which was their chief form of entertainment. The village story teller was named Dredre, a man who was not married but spent most of his evenings telling stories to the young men and they had a special house for the story telling called Nakauyama. The men would often compete with one another to see who could bring the best *nabu* (gift or payment) to the storyteller, and things such as *vakaloto* (Fijian pudding), *vakasoso* (*vudi*, or a type of banana cooked in coconut milk), prawns and other foods were presented to him.

Now, one evening before the stories began, Dredre asked each of the young men what they were going to bring him as a *nabu* the next day. When one young man named Tui Qalita was asked, he promised that the following evening he would bring an eel as his *nabu*. Everyone in the house heard this promise, and so very early the next day he set out to try and find his eel. He started at the bottom of a stream and worked his way up it towards the village, searching as he went. Before long the stream widened into a pool where he was certain that eels could be found. When he noticed eel droppings in the water he knew definitely that an eel was there and was determined to obtain it for his *nabu*.

He searched in the pool until he found a small hole, and putting his arm into the hole he began to pull out things like *masi* (bark cloth) and leaves, which surprised him greatly, but he kept on digging down for he was determined to obtain the eel. As he dug down he heard strange noises and voices from inside the hole, and these sounds were being made by the little gnomes who lived there in the hope of scaring him away. But Tui Qalita was brave, and although he was scared he continued to dig, saying to himself, "Whatever I find in this hole will be my *nabu*".

Inside the hole all was confusion, and the little gnomes were trying to decide who should be sacrificed first. Finally they decided that their leader, Tui Namoliwai, should be the one to come out first.

was ready they built a fire in the pit, and Tui Qalita was watching every move very carefully to ensure that the little god did not trick him.

When the fire was burning they piled the stones on top and then waited a long time until the stones became red hot. Finally, when the stones were glowing and red hot, Tui Namoliwai decided that at last the fire was ready. First he pulled out the few remaining pieces of burning wood, then he levelled up the stones, and all was prepared. The pit was glowing, and the flames would be seen flickering between the red hot rocks. Tui Qalita was really afraid when he looked at it, but Tui Namoliwai stepped straight into the pit. After he had walked around on the glowing rocks a few times he asked Tui Qalita to step in and join him. Still Tui Qalita was not sure whether it was really the promise of a miraculous power or whether it was just a dirty trick, and he said, "I am afraid that if I step in I will be burned".

Tui Namoliwai replied, "No you won't get burned. This is my promise to you in exchange for saving my life and sparing the lives of my people, so step in and prove it for yourself".

Tui Qalita finally made up his mind to try it, and he stepped into the pit and was amazed to find that the stones felt cold instead of hot. He felt no heat at all and this convinced him that the promise of Tui Namoliwai was true. So they held hands and walked around in the pit several times until Tui Qalita was quite satisfied with his new power. Then Tui Namoliwai said to him, "Now that we have done the first part of it, let us continue with the second part. We are going to be buried in this pit for four days and four nights and we will not be burned".

Tui Qalita hastily replied, "No! No! This is good enough. I am afraid to be buried in the pit". So the two were not buried, but in place of the two men the root of the *masawe* plant was buried instead. After this Tui Qalita decided that it was time for him to release the little man, and Tui Namoliwai then made the request that at every firewalking ceremony he should be remembered. He also placed two taboos upon firewalking; abstaining from sex and from coconut products before a performance. Finally, he promised Tui Qalita that his descendants would have the power of *vilavilavevo* until the end of the world.

Then Tui Namoliwai was released and went back to dwell with the little people in the pool, where they live to this present day. (The pool is called Namoliwai). We use the term *rere* when we refer to the little people and there are thousands of them.

Meanwhile, Tui Qalita returned to Navakaisese village keeping the story to himself. In the evening when the young men gathered to tell stories, everyone had brought their gifts for the story teller except Tui Qalita. When the time came for him to present his *nabu*, he was asked what gift he had brought. He then replied that he had brought the gift of *vilavilavevo* and went on to explain the power that he had been given, and promised to demonstrate his gift the next morning.

The next day he asked the people to help him dig a pit, cut firewood and gather stones. When that was done he arranged all the wood in the pit and set fire to it, placing the stones on top, in exactly the same way that Tui Namoliwai had shown him. Most people in the village thought that he was mad. They laughed at him saying, "*Lovo* (pit ovens) are for cooking food in, but you have built a *lovo* in order to walk on the red hot stones. And if you fall and cannot do it you will be killed".

Tui Qalita was not at all worried by what the people said but went on with his task, for he knew that he would easily do it. When everything was ready, and the people were all gathered around watching, Tui Qalita stepped into the pit and walked around it several times without burning himself although the stones were red hot. Everyone was amazed and agreed that he had indeed provided a very powerful gift. The next

time. Tui Qalita asked some of the people to step into the pit with him, which they did, and no one was burned.

Much later, when the village of Navakaisese was abandoned, the people took this remarkable gift with them, and still to the present day their descendants practise this unusual power of *vilavilavevo*.

Na vilavilairevo e a tekivu e na dua na rogo i tukuni. Na dau ni tukuni na yacana o Dredre ka dau kenai vakarau mera dau yalataka vua o ira na mai vakarorogo na nodra nabo(ka ni vakavinavinaka) me ra na kauta mai.

Firewalking intially begun from listening to storytelling. The storyteller's name was *Dredre* and it was the norm that all those who came to listen to *Dredre*'s stories, promise to bring him a *nabo* (a gift of some sort given as a token of thanks) upon their next visit.

E dua vei ira na vakarorogo na yacana ko Tuiqalita ka sega ni yalataka rawa o koya e dua na ka ia ena qai kauta ga mai na ka e sota kaya e gaunisala.

A keen listener by the name of *Tuiqalita* promised nothing, however, indicated that he would bring anything that he would come across along the way.

E dua na siga e a vakamuri uci wai cake tu ko Tuiqalita ena vanua vaka ko Sawau(Marlin Bay) qai raica o koya e dua na tobu wai ka cawiri toka e delana na moli. E a qai vakayacana na tobu ogo ko koya me o Namoliwai. Ia e a duka tu na wai ogo ka siqema sara o koya ni dua na e yavalata tiko na wai. E tatara sara yani o koya e na loma ni tobu ka kauta cake mai e dua na duna. A sa vakatulewa taka sara o koya me sa nona vakavinavinaka na duna ogo. E kidacala o Tuiqalita ni se vakananuma tiko ga na ka me cakava sa vosa yani vei koya na duna ka vakamasuti koya me kakua ni vakamatei koya. E kaya ko koya ka vaka, "Ni yalo vinaka me'u bula, O iko mo yaco mo dua na dau teitei levu duadua e Beqa." Sauma yani ko Tuiqalita ka vaka, "I Beqa taucoko ko au duadua na dau teitei." A kaya cake tale yani na duna ka vaka, "Yalovinaka me'u bula, o iko na yaco me o tagane rairai vinaka taudua e Beqa. Ka sauma lesu tale yani o Tuiqalita ka vaka, "E Beqa taucoko ko au na tagane rairai vinaka duadua." E sega ga ni soro ko koya na duna ka kaya cake tale yani, "Yalovinaka me'u bula, o iko na yaco mo dua na dau soko duadua e Beqa." Sauma tale yani ko Tuiqalita ka vaka, "Ko au mada ga au rerevaka tu na waitui ni'u kaicolo." E sa siqema sara ga e kea na duna ni sa na mate ga ka sa qai kaya yani na i otioti ni nona vakamamasu ka vaka, "Yalovinaka me'u bula kau na qai nomu kalou ni vilavilairevo." A sa vakadonuya ka ciqoma sara ko Tuiqalita nai solisoli koya. Ni sabera ni vakaraitaka na duna na kanei cakacaka, a sa vukici koya me tamata. Ni oti oya sa qai

⁸²⁴ Collected in Naceva, Beqa on Nov. 15, 2004 h.19:00 (transl. by Sipiriano Nemani).

kaya vei Tuiqalita me rau ta buka mada ka me rau vakasaqara tale ga mai e so na vatulelevu kei so na draunikau. Ni rau sa vakayacora oti ogo, sa visa sara na lovo ka vakaraitaki kece sara vei Tuiqalita na kenai cakacaka na Vilavilarevo. Na i walewale ka a vakaraitaka na duna ogo vei Tuiqalita e se muri tiko ga e daidai.

One day, Tuiqalita was walking along a river bank in the Sawau area till he came across a spinning orange on a well. He named the well *Namoliwai*. He also noticed that the well was dirty and realised instantly something moving within the latter. He then reached inside the well/spring and pulled out an eel. This, he decided, would be his gift to the storyteller. However, whilst still making his decision, Tuiqalita surprisingly jumped at the instant when the eel spoke to him begging to free his soul from his wrath. The lamented: “Please, free me, you will have the biggest plantation in Beqa”. Tuiqalita replied: “I’m the best gardener in the whole of Beqa!” The eel again pleaded: “Please, free me, you will become the most handsome man in Beqa”. Tuiqalita, again, replied: “I am the most handsome in the whole of Beqa!”. The eel did not hesitate in refraining from pleading. He again asked: “Please, free me, you will become the most sort after sailor in Beqa”. Tuiqalita replied: “I, myself, am afraid of the sea, since I’m from the inland.” The eel realised that he would die, hence, made his last plea lamenting: Please, free me, for I’ll be your god of *vilavilairevo*”. Tuiqalita without hesitation accepted the gift offered to him by the eel. Prior to the eel showing Tuiqalita the activities/ceremonies associated with *vilavilairevo*, he had to transform himself to a human being. Subsequent to the latter, the eel requested for Tuiqalita to help him find firewood, large stones, and leaves. After collecting these necessities, the two prepared an earth oven (*lovo*), and later the eel (in human form) showed Tuiqalita how the *vilavilairevo* is undertaken. The method/style that the eel showed Tuiqalita is still being practiced today.

E se wadra balavu tu ga o Tuiqalita sa lade sara ki loma ni lovo o koya na duna, ka laki kacivi Tuiqalita me rika yani ve koya. Ia o Tuiqalita e sa rere vakalevu sara. A sa qai taura na ligana o koya na duna ka rau sa taubale sara e na delani vatukatakata. E rau wavokita taucoko na lovo ia e sega ni bau kama na yavai Tuiqalita.

Whilst Tuiqalita was still staring with awe, the eel jumped into the earth-oven, and beckoned for Tuiqalita to follow suit. But Tuiqalita was filled with fright. The eel then held Tuiqalita’s hand and helped him walk on hot stones. They circled the earth-oven without Tuiqalita ever injuring or burning his feet.

Ni sa oti na nodrau wavokita na lovo, e rau sa butu sara ki tuba ka rau lululu ka kaya sara ko koya vei Tuiqalita ka vaka," Au sa solia vei iko na mana ogo, laki vakadewa taka sara vei ira na wekamu. Qarauna ka maroroya. Na cakacaka ogo e cakacaka ni yalo marau kei na yalovinaka, ia mo nanuma vinaka ga ni sa voleka na gauna ni Vilavilarevo, mo na vakatabui iko mai vei ira na tamata, mo turaga yalo vinaka ka kakua ni dau cudrucudru, ka mo lomani ira talega na lewe ni Vilavilarevo. E rawa talega ni dou bulu tu me bogi va siga va ka dou na bula vinaka tu ga e na gauna e qe kina na lovo. A sa kurekure sara ko Tuiqalita ka kaya vei koya ka vaka, "Qori sa na qai sega sara ni kamikamica vei keitou."

After they've finished circling the earth-oven, they then stepped out and shook hands; the eel then told Tuiqalita: "I've given you this *mana*, share it with your families and relatives, however, learn to preserve it and always be cautious. The activity requires one to be happy and kind, but always remember that when *vilavilarevo* draws near, you need to abstain from others; you need to be a calm man and not always consumed with anger; and be kind/love other *vilavilarevo* practitioners/members. You and your followers can be buried for four days and four nights without any injuries and/or harm inflicted on you upon the uncovering of the earth-oven." Tuiqalita just shook his head and said: "That definitely won't be to our likening".

A sauma lesu yani ko koya ka kaya,"Kevaka dou sa sega ni via bulu qai buluta ga na vasili se masawe me kemudou i sosomi. Ia e dua ga na noqu kerekere oya me dou qai bou vakarautaka tu ga e du na vakalolo lailai ni oti na Vilavilarevo. Me kakua ni vaka niu se vakasuka, kua talega ni vakacabori ia me qai kena suka tu ga na wai ni vasili. Kakua ni vaka niu de keimami na ora baleta ni keimami mataivalu gone lalai. Na vanua taucoko e dau kuvu kina na buka keimami dau raica se buka ni cava. Ke buka ni Vilavilarevo keimami na tiko kina. Ia mo nanuma sara, sa vakarau me daru veitalatala, na nomu kawa taucoko sara era na rawa ni vakayacora na Vilavilarevo me tekivu ni kua ka yacova na tavuki ni vuravura. Rau sa qai lululu na veitau ka veivakamocetaki. Me yacova na siga ni kua sa dei tu ga na i solisoli levu ogo. E daidai e sega ni butuvatu ga na turaga ni Beqa ke sa kaya na bete mo sa lako mai e na loma ni revo, veitalia ga ke ko turaga ni vei na yasana ko na rawa ni butu vatu katakata.

The eel then replied: "If yous do not want to be buried, then bury vasili or masawe as your replacements. However, I have a simple request, i.e. you prepare a small *vakalolo* after the *vilavilarevo*. Ingredients of the *vakalolo* should not consist of scraped coconut

or sugar, however, syrup from the *vasili* can be used to sweeten the latter. The vakalolo should not contain coconut for we might choke from it.....For every smoke that we see, we try to detect its purpose. If the burning of firewood is meant for *vilavilairevo* we stick to it. But, please do remember now that we are about to part, all your descendants from now on till the end of the world, they will be furnished with the skill of performing the *vilavilairevo*.” The two friends then shook hands and parted. From that day until now, the gift still exists. Now, not only men from Beqa have the skill to walk on hot stones, if the bete (traditional priest) beckons you to do the “walk”, it does not matter which province you originate from, you will be able to walk on hot stones.

THE LEGEND OF THE FIREWALKERS OF FIJI

Many years ago on the Island of Beqa, a tribe called Sawau lived in a mountain village called Navakaisese. In this village there lived a famous story teller known as Dredre, who regularly entertained the members of the tribe with his stories. It was customary for the people of the village to bring gifts to Dredre in appreciation of his entertainment.

On one occasion when asked what gifts he would like, he requested each person of the audience to bring him the first thing they could find while hunting the next day.

One of the warriors of Beqa called Tuinavaikalita went fishing for eels in the mountain stream. The first thing he caught felt like an eel, and when he pulled it out of the mud, it assumed the shape of a little man who spoke to Tui, who immediately recognized it as a spirit God.

Tui was extremely pleased and set off to present his catch to Dredre the story teller. The Spirit God, however, pleaded for his life and offered all manner of gifts in exchange. These Tui refused until finally, the spirit God offered to give him power over fire and this offer aroused his curiosity. To prove his gift, a pit was dug, lined with stones, and the great fire was lit on the stones. When the stones were white with heat, the spirit God leapt down on to the stones and called Tui to jump in with him. Finally, Tui plucked up enough courage and was surprised that he did not feel any effect from the heat. The spirit God then told him that he could be buried for four days in the oven without suffering any injury. However Tui was afraid to do so, saying that he was quite satisfied to walk on the stones.

To this day, members of Sawau Tribe are able to walk on white hot stones and direct descendants of Tuinavaikalita still act as Bete of high priest of Firewalkers of Fiji.



the Priest who has the Sacred Power to walk over hot stones.

⁸²⁵ Version posted on line on 12 July 2001 on the Pacific Harbour Cultural Centre Website www.pacific-harbour.com/cultural/page1.htm till the renovation of the theme-park (and the web site) under the new denomination: Arts Village.



Legend Of The Firewalkers Of Fiji

Many years ago on the island of Beqa (pronounced Mbengga), a tribe called Sawau lived on a mountain village called Navakeisese. In this village there lived a famous storyteller known as Dredre, who regularly entertained the members of the tribe with his stories. It was customary for the people of the village to bring gifts to Dredre in appreciation of his entertainment.

On one occasion when asked what gifts he would like, he requested each person of the audience to bring him the first things they would find while hunting the next day.

One of the warriors of Beqa called Tui-na-Ivialita, went fishing for eels (rewai) in a mountain stream. The first thing he caught, felt like an eel, when he pulled it out of the mud, it assumed the shape of a Spirit God.



Tui was extremely pleased and set off to present his catch to Dredre, the storyteller. The Spirit God, however, pleaded for his life and offered all manner of gifts in exchange. These Tui refused until finally, the Spirit God offered to give him power over fire and this offer aroused his curiosity.

To prove his gift, a pit was dug and lined with stones, and a great fire was lit on the stones. When the stones were white with heat, the Spirit God leapt down on the stones and called Tui to jump in with him. Finally, he plucked up enough courage and was surprised that he did not feel any effect from the heat. The Spirit God then told him that he could be buried for four days in the oven without suffering any injury. However, Tui was afraid to do so, saying that he was quite satisfied to walk on the stones. To this day members of the Sawau tribes are able to walk on white hot stones and direct descendants of Tui-na-Ivialita still act as Bete, or high priest, of the firewalkers of Fiji.

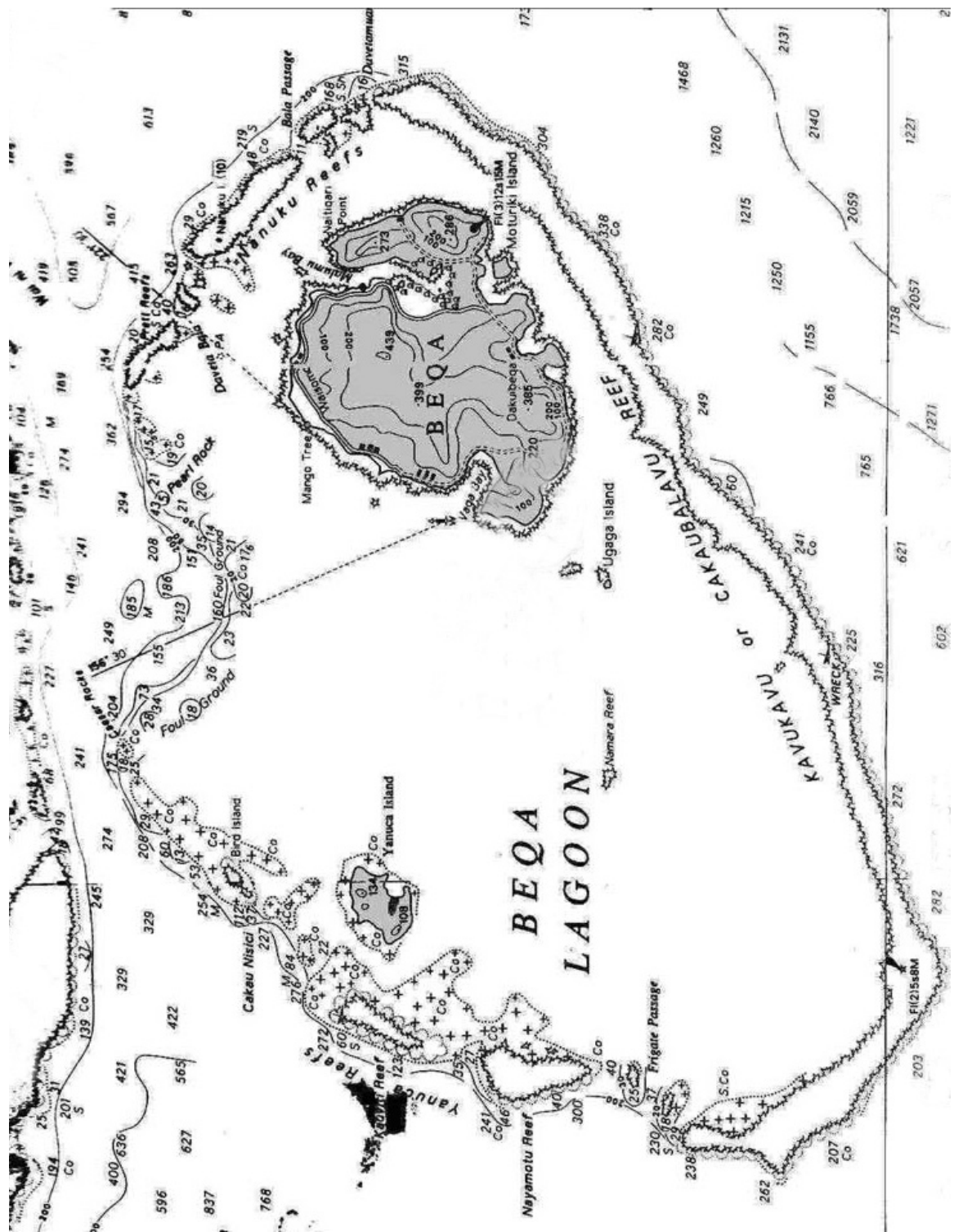
⁸²⁶ Version currently available on the Fiji Visitors Bureau website www.bulafiji.com.

APPENDIX G

Beqa maps

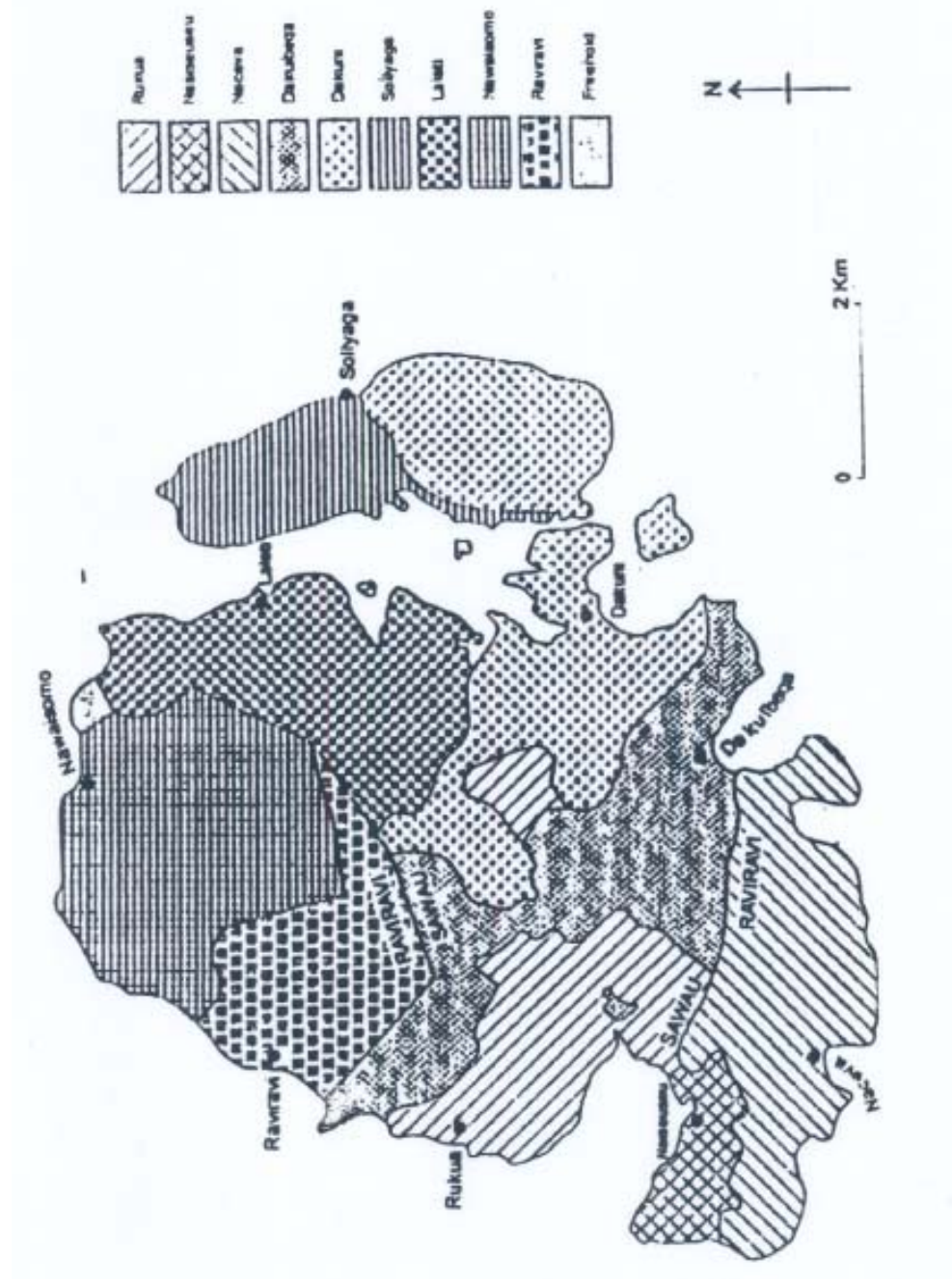
- i Beqa and Fiji Islands map
- ii Beqa's archipelago map
- iii Beqa topographic map
- iv Beqa map of the *Vanua* division
- v Beqa 'cultural' map





This topographic map of Beqa Island, Vanuatu, displays a detailed elevation profile with contour lines ranging from 100 to 350 meters. The island's coastline is irregular, featuring several bays and points. Key locations include Naitiqani Pt. on the north coast, Uuizirani Pt. on the west coast, and Nukuleka Pt. on the east coast. The map also shows various smaller settlements and landmarks such as Malumu, Taligani, and Naitiqani. The island is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, with the Beqa Barrier Reef visible to the south. The map includes a grid of latitude and longitude coordinates, with latitude ranging from 17° 40' S to 17° 55' S and longitude from 178° 05' E to 178° 15' E.

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⁸²⁸ Adapted from Burns, Leah G. 2003. Indigenous Responses to Tourism in Fiji: What is Happening? In *Pacific Island Tourism*, edited by D. Harrison, pp. 82-93. Cognizant Communication Corp., New York.

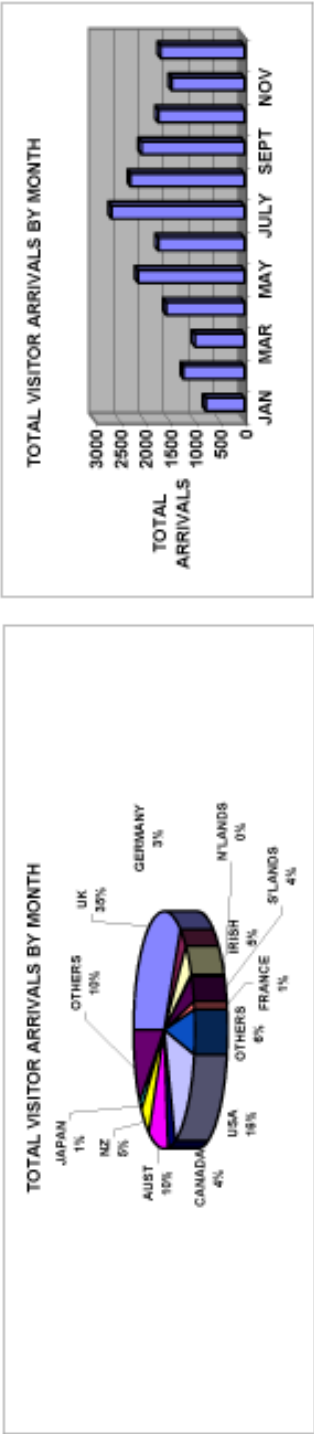
APPENDIX H
2003 Eco-tourism in Fiji chart

- i. Arrival by Country of Origin
- ii. Total Visitors Arrival by Month
- iii. Arrivals by Region

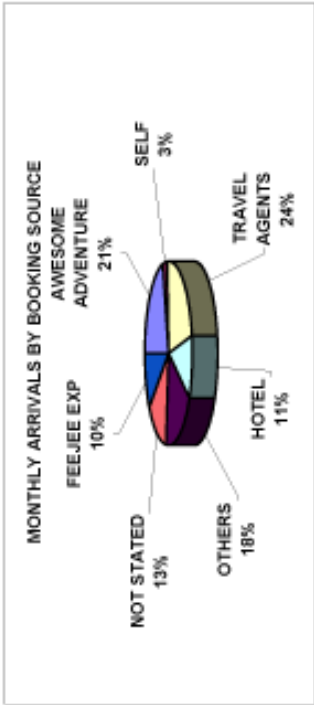
ANNUAL ECO TOURISM STATISTICS SUMMARY 2003

		COUNTRY OF ORIGIN											
		UK	GERMANY	IRISH	N'LANDS	ISLANDS	FRANCE	OTHERS	USA	CANADA	AUST	NZ	JAPAN
TOTAL		6888	690	954	47	767	212	1238	3203	789	2109	672	293
TOTAL													TOTAL
													20249

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
TOTAL		770	1218	688	1588	2127	1728	2840	2278	2080	1729	1459	1872
TOTAL													TOTAL
													20249

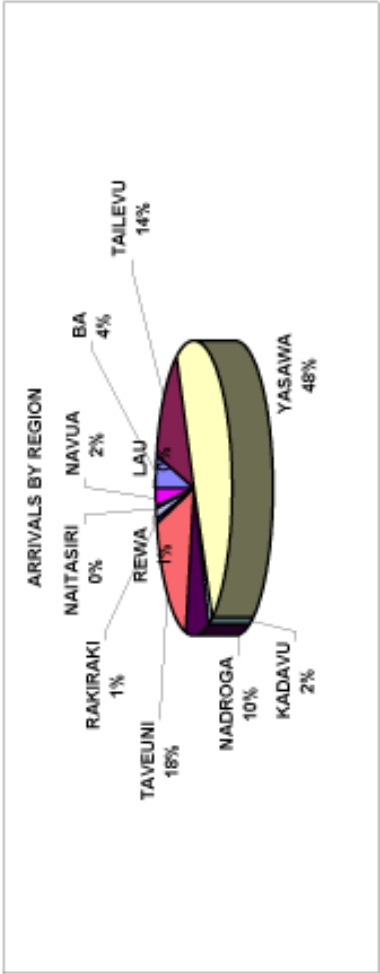
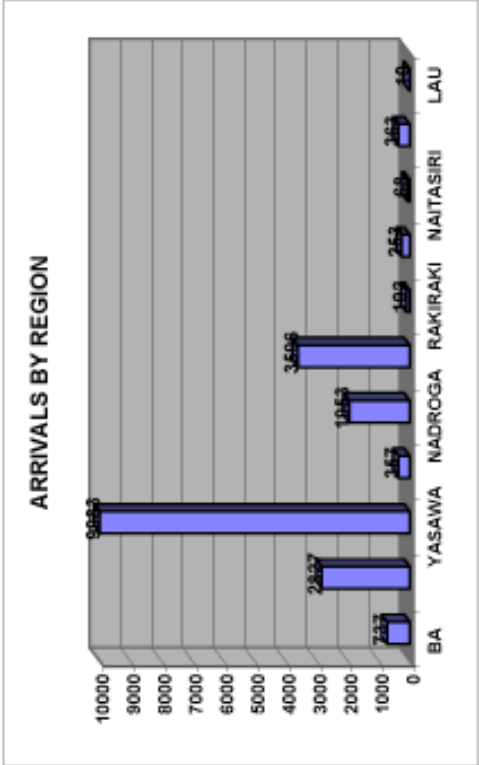


		BOOKING SOURCE					
		AWESOME ADVENTURE	SELF	TRAVEL AGENTS	HOTEL	OTHERS	NOT STATED
TOTAL		4283	824	4619	2275	3721	2898
							FEEJEE EXP
							2047
							TOTAL
							20249



ANNUAL ECO TOURISM STATISTICS SUMMARY 2003

ARRIVALS BY RESORTS	
REGION	ARRIVALS
BA	737
TAILEVU	2827
YASAWA	9883
KADAVU	357
NADROGA	1953
TAVEUNI	3596
RAKIRAKI	102
REWA	253
NAITASIRI	68
NAVUA	363
LAU	10
TOTAL	20248



APPENDIX I

***Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki* (the National inventory Project for Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture)⁸²⁹**

- 5.2.1 Background
- 5.2.2 Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights Committee
- 5.2.3 Nature and Objectives of National Inventory
- 5.2.4 Scope and Target of National Inventory
Table 1: Elements of Fijian Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Encompassed within the Inventory
- 5.2.5 Selection Criteria
- 5.2.6 Electronic Storage Information
- 5.2.7 Skeleton of Database
- 5.2.8 Information Accessibility

⁸²⁹ May 2005 Training Workshop on Field Research Methodology Designed for Cultural mapping Field Officers Trainin Manual, © Institute of Fijian Language & Culture, Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture & Heritage, Provincial Development.

5.2 The National Inventory Project for Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture.

5.2.1 Background

A national inventory for all aspects of Fijian culture is a relatively new initiative with the initial idea mooted in 2003 when the need arose to set up a formal structure to effectively police the model legislation on traditional knowledge and expressions of culture, new to Fiji, the Pacific and other countries of the world . The model legislation requires the consideration of options and mechanisms for its proper implementation, hence, the choice for the documentation of the vast aspects of Fijian Culture and its traditional holders, in a database format [inventory]. This task was designated to an "Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights Committee" formed by the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture & Heritage to undertake the necessary preparatory work required to effectively build the inventory system – a documentation of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture.

5.2.2 Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights Committee.

An internal departmental IPR committee was formed by the Ministry of Fijian Affairs to undertake the necessary preparatory work required for the formulation of the legislation. The committee comprised of officials from the Institute of Fijian Language and Culture, Department of Culture & Heritage, and the Fijian Affairs Board and the Native Lands and Fisheries Commission.

The committee was entrusted with the task of drafting a framework to initially deal with the documentation of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture within Fiji. The Committee carefully scrutinized the topic and came up with the following critical issues: data collections and national inventory; public awareness; financial assistance; development of a specific database software; capacity building; and ultimately the establishment of a cultural authority to facilitate the policing and proper implementation of the model law.

5.2.3 Nature and objectives of National Inventory.

Designated in Fijian as *Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki*, the national inventory project envisages the diverse traditional knowledge and cultural expressions that explicitly exists within the culture of the *itaukei*. For the 14 provinces that compose Fiji, each has its own distinct local knowledge and cultural system, which characterize their uniqueness. However, with globalization and rapid development in information technology, traditional expressions in Fiji are continually being exploited for commercial purposes, and on the verge of being replaced completely by a massive culture of modernism. Hence, the inventory is/was established with the following issues in mind: [i] the preservation and safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage; [ii] the promotion of cultural diversity; [iii] the respect for cultural rights; and [iv] the promotion of tradition-based creativity and innovation as ingredients of sustainable economic development.

The National Inventory Project is envisaged to be beneficial economically, socially and education wise. Having a database with thorough entries of existing holders of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture (tangible and intangible heritage) will ensure that its owners are properly recognized, identified for the non-commercial use of their knowledge and cultural expressions, and that they are compensated accordingly for the commercial use of their cultural expressions. Moreover, the creation of such framework will encourage tradition-based innovation and creativity for the custodians. It will also ensure the preservation of know-how, skills, practices, and techniques that are pivotal foundations for indigenous Fijians as a group of people with a specific cultural identity, as a community, and as an ethnic group. Furthermore, the identification and documentation of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture will ensure that it is properly transmitted, revitalized, and promoted to ensure its maintenance and viability. This will be achieved through the education and training of young people to learn, use and transmit the know-how. Such a plan will assist government stakeholders in the formulation of strategies for cultural development in Fiji's education curriculum.

5.2.4 Scope and Target of National Inventory:

What is encompassed within the inventory?

The "National Inventory of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture" facilitates the identification of existing traditional knowledge and expressions of culture and their customary owners within the 14 provinces of Fiji. Outlined herewith are aspects of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture to be covered by the inventory:

Table 1: Elements of Fijian traditional knowledge and Expressions of Culture encompassed within the inventory

Item	Description and/or outline.
Kinship	Genealogical/ kinship information. Includes totems, rank, and number of extended families, clans, tribes/phatries &c.
Heritage Sites	Sites of historical and cultural significance to a clan, tribe, village or province. These include those that are unique to a particular cultural setting.
Emigrational information.	These include movement of ancestral Fijians from a particular setting to the next. These may be due to war, sickness, a form of reparation in the aftermath of the battle whereby subjects of the tribe defeated had to be given to the triumphant group.
Traditional forms of award for bravery during war.	Traditional forms of award for bravery differ greatly in terms of bonuses, payments and gifts from modern day ceremonies. These comprise the issuance of a piece of land, the affixation of a sir-like title prior to the name of the 'qaga' signifying his achievements, eg. "koroi", offering of numerous women as wives &c.
Traditional ceremonies, rituals and practices.	Types of ceremonies of welcome, marriage, death, rekindling of kinship ties, forgiveness &c.
Traditional beliefs/ religious systems.	Forms of ritualistic and religious behaviour prior to the coming of Christianity into Fiji.
Published and unpublished material	Often, research regarding a clan, tribe, village, district, and province had been undertaken; hence, the purpose of this section is to record issues that had been recorded by researchers; those that may be sacred and those that are not.
Dialects.	A recording of all dialects that exists in Fiji and their relationship with other portions of Fiji.
Traditional Names	Names of persons, places, and sites that have a cultural meaning attached or significance.
Traditional	Forms of traditional herbal medicine available in different villages.

Medicine.	Sicknesses, remedies, taboos will all be listed in this section of the questionnaire.
Traditional Healing practices.	These are healing practices that exist in the local community such as massaging, pointing with the index finger &c
Traditional fishing methods.	Due to different locations for habitation of Fijians, there exist differing forms of fishing depending on the area being fished, the type of sea or freshwater creature being fished &c
Traditional Agriculture.	This entails the different root crop and plant varieties planted by Fijians. Season for planting; part of plant planted; taboos to be respected; traditional organic manure utilised.
Traditional crafts and designs.	Forms of Fijian craftsmanship including, architectural designs, mast making, pottery making, mat weaving, mast designs used, boat building &c.
Traditional forms of performing art.	Different aspects of performing art which includes forms of meke, drama.
	Traditional food preparation methods.
	Traditional Midwifery.
	Traditional rites of passage - life cycle focused e.g. Circumcision &c.
	Traditional games.
	Tales, Legends, stories &c
	Traditional costumes; Traditional hairdressing.
	Traditional sailing.
	Traditional forms of communal undertakings and others.

5.2.5 Selection Criteria

Most elements of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture in Fiji are unrecorded and its maintenance and/or preservation rest pivotally on continual usage and observance. Hence, it was appropriate, and not to delay it further, the recording of aspects of Fijian culture that still exists and also those that may be on the brink of extinction. However, the emphasis advocated was that information gathered on a specific element should:

- ❑ *Identify its uniqueness to a specific cultural locality. Cultural data collected should be distinct to the locality with which information is collected. It should not be copied nor duplicated from another clan, tribe, district or province. It should be unique and specific to the*

area.

- ❑ *Degree of disappearance danger [since most aspects of Fijian culture depended entirely on oral transmission].*
- ❑ *Establish that the heritage is associated with a particular community and is communally owned and not individually owned.*
- ❑ *Should be authentic.*
- ❑ *Be appropriate to their locality/village that which information is regularly provided.*

5.2.6 Electronic Storage of Information.

Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) play a crucial role in recording traditional knowledge, altering it for specific uses or to digitalize it for storage in public and private banks so that it can be recalled for any indigenous and non-indigenous utilization. Computer applications for the National Inventory is a classical example and will be an indigenous knowledge databank or database ever compiled in the country through the use of software designed specifically for the project, using the Fijian language as its format, however, programming will be done in English. The database will serve to enhance information exchange between indigenous people and local communities, also the dissemination of information about knowledge and cultural expressions to the general public, non-commercial users, and custodians.

5.2.7 Skeleton of database.

Records entered into the database will be based on the topics outlined in *Table 1* of **5.2.4** and these will be in text and accompanying images. Moreover, video and audio recordings made at respective cultural localities will be entered as entries in respective topics and aspects of intangible heritage discussed in the inventory. Each Fijian village will have entries of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions.

Specification for a typical page on the database:

Database will try to address the following:

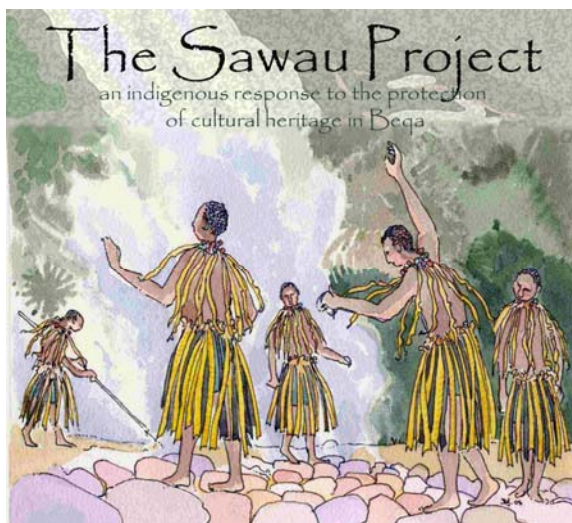
- a. Name of yavusa head, and signature.
- b. Name of researcher, topic researched.
- c. Name of informant, and other personal details outlined in questionnaire,
- d. topic researched, and signature.
- e. Village,
- f. District,
- g. Province.
- h. Textual entry of results of interview (or research).
- i. Video recordings, where necessary.
- j. Attached images (pictures), where necessary.

5.2.8 Information accessibility:

To conform with the objectives of Intellectual Property project and the concerns for safeguarding of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture of the indigenous population, final editing and input of data is restricted to the project officer after consultations with village heads and the Indigenous IPR Committee members. Future editing, after consultation with custodians will be made once approved. Viewing of database is restricted to senior officers of the office. However, for general public viewing and usage of information, custodians have to be informed and their consent sort. Besides, information will only be available to custodians of TK & EC, their tribe, clan, family members, upon the initial approval of informants.

APPENDIX L

The Sawau Project Statement of Purpose



A Ituvatuva Ni Vakadidike e Sawau

Na sasaga me taqomaki na yavu kei na itukutuku makawa ni vanua o Beqa

Vakatekivu Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga

Tukunitaka Na Lewe ni Vanua o Sawau

Tabaka Felix Colatanavanua kei Guido C. Pigliasco

Vakadodonutaka Guido C. Pigliasco, Univesiti mai Hawai'i Mānoa

Tuvana Felix Colatanavanua, Tabana Ni Vosa & iTovo Vakaviti
& Media Centre, USP

Vucu Sailasa Cakau Tora & Calvin Rore
Oceania Centre for Arts & Culture, USP

Vakarautaka Na Tabana ni Vosa kei na iTovo Vakaviti, Tabacakacaka iTaukei,
iTovo & iYau Vakamareqeti
Suva, Fiji, ©July 2005.

Na siganísucu ní yabakí 2004, a maí tekívutakí e dua na sasaga ena koro vakaturaga o Dakuibeqa ena yanuyanu o Beqa, ka ra vakaitavi kina na nona vuvale na Tui Sawau, na mataqali e ono (Nakoroqaqa, Buto, Naqara, Naivilaqata, Valeilawa kei Navusalevu) kei na koronivuli na Sawau District School. Na inaki taumada ní sasaga oqo me sarava ka dikeva na vanua o Dakuibeqa na veika e kilai tani kina se vakatakilakilataka na itovo ni bula vakaSawau. Era a vakaitavi tale ga kina eso na lewe ni yavusa o Sawau era tiko e Dakuni, Naceva, Naiseuseu, Rukua kei Soliyaga. A votu ena navunavuci oqo na gagadre me buli e dua na ituvatuva ena komibiuta na kena tabaki na veika e tukunitaki me sala ni kena maroroí ka vakadewataki na ivakarau vakavanua e kilai tani kina na yavusa na Sawau. Keimami vakabauta ni sasaga oqo ena rawa ni maroroya na veitukutuku makawa kece me baleta na neimami vanua ka me vakatetei yani vei ira na tabatamata ena gauna ni kua kei na veisiga ni mataka. E da sa tiko donuya oqo na gauna ni veivakatoroicaketaki ka levu na misini vovou se yaya livaliva era sa taleva na noda vanua. Keimami nanuma kina ni dodonu meda vakayagataki na veimataqali iyaya vou vaqo me maroroí kina na itukutuku vakamareqeti ni noda vanua me rawa kilai yani e vuravura.

E na gauna oqo esa tauyavutaka na Tabacakacaka iTaukei, iTovo kei na iYau Vakamareqeti '*Na iTuvatuva ni Kilaka iTaukei kei na Kena Matanataki*' (National Inventory on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture). A navuci na ituvatuva oqo ena 2003, na gauna a nanuma kina na matanitu veiliutaki me vakaduri e dua na lawa Kilaka iTaukei kei na Veika e Matanataki. E vakaukauataka na matanitu o Viti na veisasaga eso me baleta na kena taqomaki ka maroroí na noda itovo kei na veika eda taukena na itaukei. Qo na vuna esa vakavotukana rawa na sasaga oqo. Ia na ituvatuva oqo me kua wale ga ni ka ni vakanananu ni

veika sa sivi, ia me sala ni kena vakatakilai ka vakabulabulataki tiko na noda itovo kei na veika eda kilai tani kina na itaukei.

Na vakanananu ni neitou mataqali oya ni dodonu meda qarauna na kena vakayagataki na noda kilaka na itaukei kei na veika e matanataka mera rawa ilavo kina eso; qo me vaka esa tuvanaka na matanitu ena lawa vou oqo. Ia, keitou vakadinadinataka ni sala oqo era gadreva na veimataqali, yavusa kei na vanua me vakabulabulataka kina na noda bula vakavanua na itaukei, me rawa talega kina ni yaco na veivakatoroicaketaki. Kevaka eda sega ni qarauna meda maroroya na noda kilaka na itaukei kei na veika e matanataka ena noda sasaga vakailavo, ena rawa ni vakacacana na usutu ni noda bula vakavanua kei na veika eda kilai tani kina. E vuqa na gauna e sega ni dua na iwase ni vakacavacava se na ilavo rawati e dau vagolei kina vanua ena kena dau vakayagataki na nodra kilaka. Me vakā ena so na vanua tani, e levu na veika me baleta na noda kilaka na itaukei kei na veika e matanataka era katonī se maroroī tu vakaivola. E rawa ni maroroī ka taqomaki na noda itovo, na vosa, na meke kei na veika eda kilai tani kina kevaka eda rokova ka vakayagataka e veisiga. E dua na ka mosimosi kevaka eda sa vakayalia na noda itovo kei na iyau vakamareqeti ni noda vanua ena vuku ni kena sa vākawaletaki na kena ivurevure. E dua na kena ivakaraítaki na nodra sa yali tiko yani na noda qase era kila vinaka tu na keda itukutuku ka sega tu nira maroroī rawa.

E dua na irogorogo vinaka na kena sa okata na matanitu o Viti ena ituvatuva ni veivakatoroicaketaki na kena dikevi, maroroī ka vakabulabulataki na noda ivakarau vakavanua na itaukei. E vakamatatataki tiko kina na lawa eso kei na veitarataravi ni ka me vakayacora na noda matanitu me levu kina na veivakatoroicaketaki. E takete ni matanitu ena iTuvatuva Ni Veivakatoroicaketaki ni 2003 –

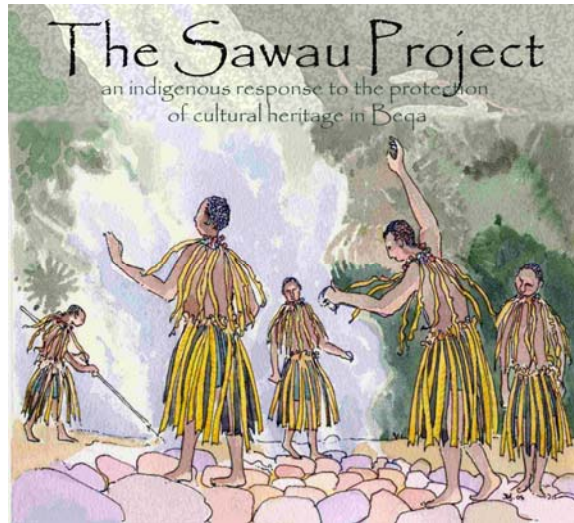
2005 se ‘Strategic Development Plan 2003-2005’ na kena “vakatulewataki ka taqomaka na noda itovo kei na iyau bula na itaukei me baleta ira na itabatamata ena veisiga ni mataka.” Oqo e salavata kei na sasaga ni matanitu me vakalawataki na Kilaka iTaukei kei na Kena Matanataki ka yavutaki mai na nodra vakadonuyavata na veiMinista ni iTovo ni Pasivika ena Seviteba ni 2002. Na bose oqo a vakayacori mai Numea, e Niu Kaledonia, ka vakarautaka e rua na isoqosoqo cokovata ni matanitu ena Pasivika, na Secretariat of the Pacific Community kei na ‘Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat’, vakā tale ga kina na Matabose cokovoto kei vuravura qarava vakatabakidua na itovo, vuli kei na sainisi (UNESCO). Ena vula Okotova ni 2003, a vakalawataka na UNESCO na kena maroro ni noda itovo kei na iyau vakamareqeti na itaukei okati kina na noda kilaka se na ‘Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage’. Oqo e dua na ivalavala vou, ia sa ikalima ni kena mataqali e vakabauti ni na vakaduavatataka na veimatanitu e vuravura ena nodra sasaga me taqomaki na veiyau bula ni noda vanua. E vakabauti tale ga ni qo e rawa ni vakaukauataka na isema ni veimata tamata itaukei kei na veimatanitu.

E dua tale na vakasama bibi na kena taqomaki na nodra dodonu na itaukei ni kilaka me vakā ni sa vakalawataki na dodonu yadua sega ni vakamataqali se yavusa se vakaisoqosoqo. E gadrevi me vakalawataki na noda dodonu na itaukei ina noda itovo kei na ivakarau vakavanua baleta nida sa tiko donuya na totolo ni veisau esa yaco tiko ena noda vanua. Na lalawa oqo era okati kina eso tale na lawa me vaka na Copyright Act, Performers Protection Act, Patent Act, Merchandise Marks Act, Industry Emblem Act, Trademarks Act, Fair Trading Act 1992 kei na United Kingdom Designs Act. Na matanitu o Viti e lewena na WIPO Convention, Hague Convention, Berne Convention kei na Rome

Convention.

Ia, na veilawa oqo era vakaiyalayala tu na ka e dikeva, so na leqa era sega ni wali rawa kina. E so na tiki ni veilawa oqo e sega ni veiraurau kei na sasaga ni kena taqomaki na Kilaka iTaukei kei na Kena Matanataki. Dua na kena ivakaraitaki oya na kena vakadewataki na itovo kei na iyau bula ni itaukei ki vua eso na loma ni dua na itikotiko se vanua. E na gauna oqo e rawarawa sara na nodra vakayagataki ka veisautaka na tamata veika e matanataka na kilaka itaukei. Na veilawa me baleta na noda dodonu na itaukei ni iyau bula, a sega ni buli ena vuku ni dua na itikotiko se vanua, ia, a buli taumada ena vukudra yadudua na tamata. E sega nira vakatakilai kina na dodonu vakavanua ka vakaiyalayala tale ga na gauna e taqomaki kina na veika era bulia se navuca. Ia na dodonu ni kilaka itaukei e tawa macala na dede ni gauna ena oti kina na kena taqomaka.

Na sasaga oqo e sega ni yavutaki me rawa ilavo, ia keimami vakabauta ni na yaga sara vakalevu ena kena vakatoroicaketaki na veika keimami vulica me baleti keimami. Qo na sala e rawa nira vakayaloqaqataki kina na veivanua vakaitaukei me vakatoroicaketaki na veika eda rawata kei na dikeva tale ga na sala e dodonu me muri me tauri kina na itukutuku; okati kina na cakacakavata kei ira na veitabana se tabacakacaka vakamatanitu keimami sema. E nuitaki tale ga ni cakacaka oqo ena vakavulici keimami ena neimami dodonu me vaka ni keimami itaukei ni kilaka, vakauasivi na kena taqomaki na neimami iyau vakamareqeti. Qo ena vukea vakalevu sara na veivanua e Viti vaka tale ga kina ena Yatu Pasivika eda sema tu kina vakaveiwekani. Keimami vakabauta ni vuli vakaoqo ena vakavotukana kina na noda sasaga meda lewa vinaka na kena maroro'i na noda iyau bula na itaukei ka me bula tu ga kina na keda itukutuku.



Introduction by Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga

Narrated by the Sawau people

Filmed and photographed by Felix Colatanavanua & Guido Carlo Pigliasco

Edited by Felix Colatanavanua

Directed by Guido Carlo Pigliasco

Department of Anthropology, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Multimedia support by the Media Centre, University of the South Pacific

Music by Sailasa Cakau Tora & Calvin Rore

Oceania Centre for Arts & Culture, University of the South Pacific

Produced by the Institute of Fijian Language & Culture
Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture & Heritage, Provincial Development
Suva, Fiji Islands, © July 2005.

Our project started around Christmas 2004, in the chiefly village of Dakuibeqa on the island of Beqa, with the participation of the family of the Tui Sawau, the six clans (Nakoroqaqa, Buto, Naqara, Naivilaqata, Valeilawa and Navusalevu), and the local Sawau District School. The initial goal was merely to observe what the people of Dakuibeqa saw as important elements that defined the Sawau tribe's culture. Soon, members from the other Sawau villages: Dakuni, Naceva, Naiseuseu, Rukua and Soliyaga, also joined the project. During this re-discovery process, we realized that for our purpose we needed a multimedia interactive tool. We believe that this project should be an unfolding one, open-ended, giving an opportunity to everybody in our community of today and tomorrow to add and secure information about our land and our heritage, instead of placing our culture in a box, freezing it in a fixed medium, like a book or a film.

At the same time, the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture & Heritage, Provincial Development has launched the Na ituvatuva ni kilaka itaukei kei na kena matanataki (National Inventory on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Project). Its idea mooted back in 2003 when the need arose to set up a formal structure to effectively police the model legislation on traditional knowledge and expressions of culture. Fiji is highly committed to the protection and enhancement of the social and cultural values of the indigenous community. This commitment derives from the recognition of traditional knowledge and cultural expression as a means of self-expressions, social identity and a living and ever-developing tradition, rather than just a memory of the past.

Fiji and our tribe are concerned with the exploitation of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture for commercial gains without due

respect or acknowledgments given to the cultural and economic interest of the mataqali, yavusa, and vanua from which they originate. And in order to adapt these cultural elements to the needs of the market, they are often distorted or mutilated. More often than not, no share of the returns from its exploitation is given to the communities, which have developed and maintained them for generations. Moreover, elements of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture, like in most indigenous cultures, are mainly unrecorded. Indigenous Fijian customs, rituals, language, dances, traditional etiquette are oral, and preservation rests pivotally on continual usage and observance. The brutal reality is that if indigenous Fijians lose their culture and heritage those will be lost forever, since no fountain exists elsewhere from which they can be retrieved.

A positive step that Fiji's Government has taken is the integration of a provision for culture in its Development strategy documents, outlining policies and programmes for sustainable growth in Fiji. A goal for the cultural sector outlined in its Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2003-2005 is the "*the protection and management of our culture and heritage for current and future generations*". This goal transpired with Fiji's adoption of the South Pacific Model Law on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture in September 2002, during the regional Cultural Minister's Meeting in Noumea, New Caledonia, commissioned by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and UNESCO. In October 2003, UNESCO General Conference adopted The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This new Convention, the fifth of its kind, is believed to bind the States Parties to take the necessary measures, including, for instance, identification, in order to ensure the safeguarding of the international cultural heritage and

to strengthen solidarity and cooperation at regional and international levels in this field.

The issues of the protection of the rights of indigenous intellectual properties, most of which concerning copyrights, is another urgent one. The rights of the indigenous people expressing their own culture must be implemented due to the rapid globalization process. Copyrights legislation that exists in Fiji comprises the Copyright Act, Performers Protection Act, Patent Act, Merchandise Marks Act, Industry Emblem Act, Trademarks Act, Fair Trading Act 1992, the amended Fair Trading Act 1998 and the United Kingdom Designs (Protection) Act. Fiji is signatory to the WIPO Convention, the Hague Convention, the Berne Convention, TRIPS Agreement and the Rome Convention.

However, all these laws are generally limited in application and restrictive. Under the current IPR legislation in Fiji, there is an inadequacy in the protection of elements of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. For instance, the transmitting of indigenous cultural and intellectual property is traditionally only given to certain persons in the community for certain purposes. On the contrary, with existing laws, indigenous cultural expressions are in the public domain where it is freely accessible and transferable. Moreover, IPR laws in Fiji, and like any other Pacific Island Country, was designed to be held by individuals rather than communities; do not recognize communal rights; limited period of protection (whereas traditional knowledge is held in perpetuity from generation to generation); fixation on material forms (to obtain copyright, a work must be written or recorded in some permanent tangible forms), and many others, hence limiting their scope on the issue.

We have faith that this no-profit project will become a useful educational tool, encouraging indigenous communities to build research capacity, methodologies, linkages and institutional collaborations. We hope that our project will help raising awareness on indigenous intellectual property rights and about the protection of our intangible cultural heritage, inspiring other indigenous communities in Fiji as well in the Pacific region, that are its very lifeblood. We believe that raising awareness can enhance “in situ” preservation, the preservation of our cultural expressions as a living evolving body of knowledge.

APPENDIX M
The Sawau Project
Introduction by Bulou Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga

Au sa doka ka vakavinavinaka sara vakalevu e na veisureti ka a yaco mai vei au mai vei Mr Guido Carlo Pigliasco mai na Univesiti mai Hawaii, me au mai vakaitavi e na kena mai vakadikevi na i tovo vakavanua kei na i tukutuku makawa ni noqu yavusa.

Ko au ko Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga, au lewe ni mataqali turaga ko Nakoroqaqa e na yavusa ko Sawau e na yanuyanua ko Beqa, ka tuakana marama na Turaga na Tui Sawau ko Ratu Timoci Matanitobua, na neimami turaga ka i liuliu na kai Sawau.

Na neitou i tavi na mataqali turaga, mai na vei yabaki sa oti yani ka yacova mai ni kua ko ya na veiliutaki, veitokoni kei na veivakacokocokotaki ni lewe ni yavusa. Ogo e wili kina na veiliutaki vei ira na lewe ni ono na mataqali e Dakuibega, ko ya ko Nakoroqaqa, Buto, Naqara, Naivilaqata, Navusalevu kei Valeilawa. E ra wili talega kina na vei koro e so e Beqa ka ra lewe se qali ki na yavusa ko Sawau, ogo ko Dakuni, Soliyaga, Naceva, Naiseuseu kei Rukua.

Na kena mai veitalanoataki na vakasama ogo e a tekivutaki mai na koro turaga ko Dakuibega e na siga ni sucu ni yabaki 2004. Keitou a mai sota kina kei Mr Pigliasco ka sa mai lomavata sara me baleta na sala me keitou na mai muria e na vakadidike ogo, ka me vakabibitaki sara kina na kena vakadikevi na vilavilairevo, na i solisoli ka soli vei ira na neimami qase. Keitou via vakadikeva na kena i tekitekivu na vilavilairevo, na nodra veitosoyaki na neimami qase, na gaunisala e ra a muria mai kei na kena vakaqarai na nodra koro makawa.

Au taleitaka sara na vakasama ogo me baleta ni noqu vakabauta ni na dolava na katuba ki na kena vulici na i tukutuku ni veika sa yaco se i tukutuku makawa ni yavusa ka na vukei keimami talega e na kena taqomaki ka maroroï na neimami i tovo vakavanua ka vakauasivi sara na vilavilairevo kei na qoli kubu kevaka keimami kila na kena i talanoa. Ogo e rua na i tovo vakavanua ka kilai raraba kina na yavusa ko Sawau.

E na noqu gade wavoki tu e na vei yasai vuravura, au sa mai vulica kina na kena dredre dina na noda dui tovo vakavanua kei na i tukutuku makawa, veitalia sara na vanua cava e da cavutu mai kina. Au

taleitaka sara na vei taro e dau tarogi mai vei au baleta ni au kai Viti. E dua na taro e dau tarogi vakawasoma koya me baleta na vilavilairevo. Me baleta ogo, e sa mai vakadeitaka sara kina e lomaqu na nona i tutu na yavusa ko Sawau e na vuravura

raraba, e na kena raici mai na noda i tovo vakavanua na kai Viti mai vei ira na kai tani.

Keitou tekivuna na vakadidike ogo e na kena vakaqarai na vu na i tukutuku ni vei ka sa yaco kei na i tukuni ka robota tu na yavusa. Keitou taubale ka vakaqara e lomai Beqa, takosova na veiuciwai, na veikau kei na veitokaitua ka ni ogo na gaunisala e ra a muria mai na neimami qase. Keitou via vakabibitaka sara na kena vakadikevi vakatitobu na i tukuni ni vilavilairevo.

Ni kua, na kena tovolei me vakayagataki e so na i tovo vakavanua me i vurevure ni lavo me vaka na vilavilairevo e na vei otela e Viti Levu, e sa mai vakamamadataka sara kina na kena i balebale kei na kena dokai se rokovi.

Na vilavilairevo talega e sa mai veivuke sara vakalevu kina Matanitu ko Viti e na kena kaburaki yani ki na vei yasai vuravura na noda i tovo vakavanua na i taukei me vaka na nodra a lako ki Niu Siladi kei Idia e so na lewe ni neitou yavusa. Na veivuke mai na Tabacakacaka ni Taukei talega, e sa mai tadola kina na gaunisala vei ira na kai Sawau. Ogo e na kena mai vakayacori na vilavilairevo vei ira na vulagai dokai ni vanua ko Viti me vakataki Prince Charles e na yabaki 1974 kei Prince Andrew e na 1998. E da rawa ni raica kina na Matanitu ko Viti e na nona sa mai vakanuinui sara tu ki na yavusa ko Sawau me dau mai vakalasalasa ki vei ira na vulagi dokai. Ogo e na kena vakayacori na vilavilairevo kei na qoli kubu. Na qoli kubu e dua talega na i tovo vakavanua ka ra kilai kina na kai Sawau, me vaka na nodra a qoli vua na Duke mai Gloucester e na yabaki 1936 kei Prince Charles e na yabaki 1974.

Ko koya gona ogo, ko keimami na kai Sawau, keimami sa nuitaka sara tu na kena vakalesui tale mai ki Beqa na i solisoli ogo.

Vinaka Vakalevu.

Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga

I am honoured to be part of this project.

I am Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga, a member of the chiefly clan of Nakoroqaqa, of the tribe of Sawau on the island of Beqa. I am the eldest sister of the Tui Sawau, Ratu Timoci Matanitobua, the paramount chief of the Sawau people.

For centuries, the chiefly clan has represented leadership and continuity in the tribe. We have also represented a focus, thereby giving unity to the tribe which includes six clans in Dakuibeqa village; Nakoroqaqa, Buto, Naqara, Naivilaqata, Navusalevu and Valeilawa. It also includes the other villages on the island of Beqa that are part of the Sawau tribe: Dakuni, Soliyaga, Naceva, Naiseuseu and Rukua.

Mr Guido Carlo Pigliasco of the University of Hawai'i, brought the project to my attention around Christmas of 2004 at the chiefly village of Dakuibeqa. At the meeting, it was suggested that it would be beneficial if as members of the chiefly clan we would participate in some of the research. I agreed to be part of the project as the subject matter is very dear to me, the preservation of my tribe. We then began our task of looking into the migration of our ancestors as well as exploring historic sites.

We started our research aimed at re-discovering Sawau history, legends and lost memories by literally going out to “search” for them through long hikes across rivers, through dense rainforests and over mountains and ridges. Our focus was mainly on the legend of the *vilavilairovo* (fire walking), the gift given to our ancestors.

This project will help to open doors to the teaching and reinforcement of traditions and customs that recently may have been blurred due to external influences. Fijian culture, previously has always been passed down through generations via storytelling. There are no recorded histories, therefore, a project like this can help us recapture, restore and preserve them for future generations.

Today, the relationship between tradition, modernity and the market place is not always perceived to be a happy one. Sometimes the

imitation or marketing of cultural forms and cultural specific artistic works by the commercial sector might be counterproductive to the source community, therefore, eroding cultural traditions.

The creation or use of traditional cultural expressions outside the context of the cultural community may have a negative impact on that community in subtle yet destructive ways... Thus, a project like this one is helping the community in several ways: reclaiming intellectual property rights, revitalizing cultural practices, restoring its position in history

by re-telling its own stories and repatriating customs and values.

Over the years Fijian fire walking has played a vital role in introducing Fijian culture to the world. Through the assistance of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, the Sawau tribe was able to display their gift of fire walking when they performed at a ceremony for Prince Charles in 1974 and for Prince Andrew in 1998. The Government of Fiji has looked to the Sawau tribe over the years as a source of Cultural entertainment which involved the *vilavilavevo* (fire walking) and the *qoli kubu* (fish drive) to visiting dignitaries. The *qoli kubu*, is another custom that the Sawau tribe is known for, since it has been performed for the Duke of Gloucester in 1936, Prince Charles in 1974, and for other important visitors, along with the fire walking ceremony.

Today, the fire walking ceremony is performed for tourists in hotels and resorts on the main island of Viti Levu by the Sawau tribe. Some of us, members of the tribe are concerned with the exploitation of the fire walking by some for purely monetary gains. In the near future, the Sawau tribe is looking forward to the repatriation of the ceremony to its point of origin on Beqa Island.

Thank You.

Ro Mereani Tuimatanisiga

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